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General Assembly

Sixty-fourth session

Official Records

10th plenary meeting
Saturday, 26 September 2009, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki ..... (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Valero Briceño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

General debate

Address by Mr. Sali Berisha, Prime Minister of the Republic of Albania

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Albania.

Mr. Sali Berisha, Prime Minister of the Republic of Albania, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Sali Berisha, Prime Minister of the Republic of Albania, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Berisha (Albania): I have the special pleasure today to extend to Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, President of the General Assembly, my congratulations on his excellent work in presiding over the sixty-fourth session of this Assembly. I would also like to thank his predecessor, Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, for his work in successfully leading the Assembly at its sixty-third session.

I avail myself of this opportunity to extend my greetings to all those present in this Hall today. I also express my deep gratitude to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his high competence and professionalism in leading the United Nations, and acknowledge his important personal contribution to the success of this session.

We are gathered here today after a year in which the world has faced one of the worst financial and economic crises in history. We are gathered here once again at a time when hundreds of millions of people are being oppressed by tyrannical regimes or are facing extreme poverty, disease and major health or social calamities. We are gathered here at a time when brutal conflicts continue to take the lives of innocent people in various regions of our world, and when nuclear crises in Iran and North Korea represent a genuine threat to world peace.

Albania and the Albanian people continue to engage in international cooperation and are determined to offer their modest contribution to advancing peace, freedom and security and respect for human rights, fighting poverty, promoting sustainable development and prosperity and, last but not least, protecting the environment.

(*spoke in French*)

As a European country, Albania remains fully committed and determined to carry out every reform and to take every decision and every other measure required of it on the road to membership of the European Union (EU). More than 94 per cent of Albanians support Albania's application process for joining the EU. This is not only highly encouraging,

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but also a major obligation for my Government to proceed swiftly along this path. This autumn, we expect a positive response from the Council of Ministers of the European Union to our application for candidate status, while we also hope to obtain visa liberalization as soon as possible.

Albania is a new but functioning democracy. About two months ago, we held general parliamentary elections. The international watchdog Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights reported that the elections met the principal standards of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and deserve a generally positive assessment. The newly elected Government has proclaimed the following core pillars of its programmes: building new and modern infrastructure throughout the country; bringing Albania into the digital age; reforming the health-care and education systems; fighting poverty, and creating new jobs for Albanian citizens.

Next year here at the United Nations, we will assess the progress we have made towards fulfilling the Millennium Goals. Albania has put intense effort into achieving significant progress in this area. Over the past three years, some 400,000 Albanians have moved up from below the poverty line, while extreme poverty has been reduced by 70 per cent; tens of thousands of new jobs have been created; the number of university students has doubled and infant mortality has been drastically reduced.

(*spoke in English*)

The years 2008 and 2009 have seen the worst financial and economic crisis the world has known since the Great Depression. The Albanian economy has felt the consequences of the crisis. Its exports fell by 10 per cent and the levels of financial credit were drastically reduced. Despite these consequences, however, Albanian gross domestic product (GDP) grew by more than 5 per cent in the first six months of 2009, our revenues saw an 8 per cent increase compared with those of last year, and foreign direct investment was 59 per cent higher than last year.

I believe that the main factors protecting the Albanian economy in this crisis were, first, the very fact that Albania has the lowest fiscal burden in Europe and that its economy is largely based on liberal standards; secondly, the fact that my Government has invested 10 per cent of the country's GDP in infrastructure projects in 2009, or, taking into account investment for 2008, 20 per cent of GDP over the past two years; thirdly, our thorough reforms aimed at achieving smaller Government, as a result of which Albania now has one of the smallest public administrations per capita in Europe and, indeed, in the entire world; and, last but not least, the very favourable climate for business and investment created by my Government over the past four years. I take this opportunity to invite investors from all countries to consider my country for their projects, which will definitely turn out to be success stories for them, and for Albania.

Albania has maintained excellent cooperation with the United Nations and its agencies. Albania is one of the pilot countries of the Delivering as One initiative, and through its experience and positive results is making a real contribution to this United Nations reform. Delivering as One provides for excellent savings of time and money, as well as much more efficient coordination of the work of United Nations agencies in their cooperation with Member States. This project has had an excellent track record in my country due to the coherence and better coordination of the activities of United Nations bodies with those of our national authorities, particularly with regard to aligning international projects with the country's priorities.

We have been pleased to see that our reform priorities and national strategy on European integration are in full harmony with the Millennium Development Goals and those of the Delivering as One initiative. The outcome has demonstrated that this project, the philosophy of which depends on the concept of national ownership, has produced more efficient implementation of United Nations development programmes.

Albania is a multireligious society with religious harmony par excellence. In the framework of the Alliance of Civilizations and in accordance with our national strategy on intercultural dialogue, we offer our example of religious harmony and coexistence, one of the most invaluable spiritual heritages of our nation, as a contribution to the aims of this United Nations initiative.

This general debate was preceded by the Summit on Climate Change. It gives me great pleasure to inform the Assembly that more than 90 per cent of the electricity my country consumes comes from

renewable hydroelectric power. Although we are open to other energy sources, including nuclear, we are working hard and have so far secured about €5 billion in new investment for new hydroelectric, wind and biomass energy plants. Albania intends to become a small super-Power of green energy in the region.

The last decade of brutal conflict in the Balkans seems to have been consigned to the annals of history. The countries of that region are now engaged in a process of cooperation in all fields and in European and Euro-Atlantic integration. This year, Albania and Croatia became full members of NATO. Other countries of the region have made significant progress towards EU and NATO membership.

I must stress at this point that, although only a short time has passed since Kosovo's declaration of independence, the establishment of the independent state of Kosovo has become an important factor for peace and stability in South-East Europe. In that country, which declared independence 20 months ago, inter-ethnic relations have improved and inter-ethnic tensions have been significantly reduced. Serbs are no longer leaving Kosovo. The opposite is happening — many Serbian families are coming back to Kosovo to build their future in their country. My Government is determined to help and assist the Government of Kosovo in its projects to facilitate the return of the displaced people of that country.

The European Union has deployed its Rule of Law Mission, which is doing an excellent job and providing extremely valuable help to the Government of Kosovo and its authorities in consolidating the rule of law and functional democracy in Kosovo, as well as in developing the highest European standards for the coexistence of the various ethnic communities. The International Security Force in Kosovo has also played a very positive role, and the very fact that its strength has been reduced is clear evidence of the stability in that country.

Meanwhile, 63 States Members of the United Nations have recognized independent Kosovo, and the Republic of Kosovo has become a member of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Nevertheless, Kosovo has not yet assumed the place that it deserves in the family of sovereign countries of this prestigious Organization.

On this occasion, I would like to point out that all the countries that recognize the Republic of Kosovo and the international institutions that have accepted it in their forums as an independent member State have done so because, above all else, they are convinced that the independence of Kosovo and its international recognition make a major contribution to peace and stability in South-East Europe. That is why I take this opportunity to express my deepest gratitude to all Governments and States Members of the United Nations that are considering a review and assessment of the existing reality in South-East Europe and the possibility of recognizing the independence of Kosovo. In my judgment, that would be a great contribution to peace, stability, security and cooperation in our region.

Fourteen years ago, after condemning the coercive oppression, violence and barbarism of the Milosevic regime against Albanians in Kosovo, 137 States Members of the United Nations voted in resolution 49/204 of 23 December 1994 to recognize and respect the will of the inhabitants of Kosovo. Today, that will has become the reality of an independent Kosovo and has been recognized by 63 countries that took that historic vote. I hope and firmly believe that the rest of the countries that voted for that historic resolution will reaffirm the will that they expressed 14 years ago — this time through their recognition of Europe's newest State, the Republic of Kosovo.

With its foreign policy of peace and good relations with all countries, its modest but important contribution to international missions of peace and human rights protection through its policy of good neighbourliness, and a moderate and constructive role in the region, Albania has become a producer of and a direct contributor to stability and security in the region and at the global level.

Today, Albania participates in peacekeeping missions in several international operations in the framework of the United Nations and other regional security organizations, such as in Afghanistan, Bosnia, Iraq, Chad and other countries. Only about two months ago, Albania doubled its number of troops in the International Security Assistance Force mission. My country acknowledges and supports every effort for global peace and security, and will continue to support all efforts of the United Nations, NATO and other actors that promote peace, stability and security in the world and that keep in check those two countries that threaten it — Iran and North Korea — with their very dangerous nuclear programmes.

All States Members of the United Nations share the responsibility for the efficient functioning of this Organization. No one can ignore the track record of the United Nations activities in many fields. Whenever there is a crisis, poverty, famine, disease or disaster, the United Nations is there to provide relief and support.

However, it has long been evident that the world, countries and the complexity of international relations develop much faster than the United Nations is able to adjust and adapt itself to the new realities. That is why Albania strongly supports the continuation of the reform process of this Organization and the further improvement of the United Nations system. A more efficient decision-making mechanism is pivotal in that respect. We support the efforts to reform the Security Council. We believe that in order to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century, we need a Security Council that is efficient, transparent and legitimate in its decision-making process and in which regions and individual Member States are adequately represented.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Republic of Albania for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Sali Berisha, Prime Minister of the Republic of Albania, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Josaia V. Bainimarama, Prime Minister and Commander of the Military Forces of the Republic of the Fiji Islands

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister and Commander of the Military Forces of the Republic of the Fiji Islands.

Mr. Josaia V. Bainimarama, Prime Minister and Commander of the Military Forces of the Republic of the Fiji Islands, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Josaia V. Bainimarama, Prime Minister and Commander of the Military Forces of the Republic of the Fiji Islands, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Bainimarama (Fiji): I extend our warm greetings to the President and to this Assembly. I congratulate him on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at this sixty-fourth session. I pay tribute to his predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, for presiding over the sixty-third session with great sensitivity and for bringing a human face to our work.

The sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly will address important contemporary issues of interest to all Member nations. Such issues include seeking out effective responses to global crises and strengthening multilateralism and dialogue on international peace, security and development. Those issues are indeed of critical importance to my own country, a small island developing State that has been enriched by its membership of and participation in the United Nations.

Fiji and its people, like all small developing island States, are among the first victims of contemporary global crises, such as the financial and economic crisis, the 2009 H1N1 pandemic and, most dramatic of all, the phenomenon of climate change. In small economies like ours, those global events have a very real effect on the daily livelihoods of our people. For our part, we have attempted to respond to some of those crises by making policy changes and adjustments, encouraging our people to grow their own food and discouraging food imports wherever possible. Over the past two years, the size of our public service has been rationalized. We have maintained a very streamlined Cabinet structure and significantly controlled Government operational costs.

There have been critics of the events in Fiji since December 2006, when the military, with great reluctance, was forced to remove the then Government of Fiji. I believe that these critics are largely unaware of the extent to which politicians, in league with those who employ terror as a tactic to push racial supremacy and a corrupt agenda, had become a threat to the safety and security of our people. Terrorism has become a global issue and it impacts Fiji as well. We are fully cooperating in the international effort to control and contain this scourge.

Next year on 10 October, Fiji will celebrate the fortieth year of its independence and the fortieth anniversary of its membership in the United Nations. We embraced our independence full of enthusiasm, excited by the prospect of deciding our own future and believing that our community as a whole would work

together to achieve a better life for all of our people. Our path has not been smooth or easy.

The President of Fiji abrogated the Constitution on 10 April this year. He took this step when a Court of Appeal ruling created a legal vacuum — a constitutional anomaly which would have also prevented implementation of the reforms which were mandated by him in order to achieve a truly democratic State.

On 1 July of this year, I announced a road map to lead Fiji to a new constitution and elections based on equality, equal suffrage, human rights, justice, transparency, modernity and true democratic ideals. My Government and I were mandated to carry out and to continue the reforms, which will ensure that true, democratic, non-communal and equal suffrage-based elections for parliamentary representation will be held by September 2014. A road map to implement this mandate was announced on 1 July of this year.

Together with stringent steps to protect our economy from the effects of the world economic crisis, work will commence on a new constitution by September 2012. The basis for the new constitution will be the ideals and principles formulated by the People's Charter for Change and Progress, a document prepared following widespread consultations with and input from the people of Fiji. The People's Charter was adopted by the President after the endorsement of the majority of the people of Fiji.

Work on the new constitution will involve consultations with all the ordinary citizens of our country, as well as with civil society. Consultations will focus on issues such as the size of the new parliament, the sustainability of a bicameral system, the terms of office of Government, and systems of accountability of Government to the people. The new constitution will implement reforms and the results of extensive consultations and will be in place by September 2013. This will give the people of Fiji a year to become familiar with its provisions before the elections take place in September 2014.

There have been critics of this timeline. These critics have asked why work on the new constitution will not commence before September 2012. The answer is very simple, at least to those who know and understand Fiji's history. Fiji has a colonial history that has created many anomalies and inequalities and whose legacy resonates today. Consequently and due also to the politicians, our post-colonial period has been punctuated by political instability. On each occasion that a new Government has been voted into power, the old elite which benefited financially from the previous established Government has been able to successfully destabilize the Government and to replace it with its own supporters and representatives. This was possible only because those institutions of the State that were supposed to protect democracy and democratic values instead colluded with the elite to destabilize and replace the new Government.

And that is not all. Fiji has suffered more than 20 years of mismanagement, corruption and nepotism. Our infrastructure, our judicial system and our systems of accountability have all remained underdeveloped and unproductive. Many of our finest brains have left the country because they could see no future in a country governed by ethno-nationalism, corruption and greed. In order to ensure that democracy has a real chance of survival in Fiji's future, serious and principled reforms must be implemented to build roads, institutions and values.

Together with infrastructure, the hearts and minds of our people must adopt and cherish true democracy. The way of the old elite must never triumph again. There must be reforms before elections to ensure that democracy is sustainable for Fiji's long-term future. The people of Fiji deserve better than the short-term band-aid solutions we have experienced over the past decades.

I ask for patience and understanding, particularly from our neighbours, who have shown a surprising lack of understanding and disregard of the peculiar situation which our country has experienced since independence. Put another way, there is an almost blind faith that once independence has been granted to those who were under colonial rule and the machinery of democracy begins to work, the country concerned will enjoy smooth sailing. Nothing could be further from the truth. I invite the international community to engage with us, to visit our country to see the situation, and to provide practical support and assistance to enable us to implement the reforms.

History is replete with the struggles of people the world over for self-determination in order to be free from subjugation and foreign domination. Our own experience should have provided some indication, if

one is needed, of how difficult it has been for us to achieve true, genuine and sustainable democracy.

Many of the nations represented in this Hall today have experienced the traumas of nation-building. It would not be out of place to reflect on what President Obama said during his address to the General Assembly on Wednesday, 23 September:

> "Democracy cannot be imposed on any nation from the outside. Each society must search for its own path, and no path is perfect. Each country will pursue a path rooted in the culture of its people and in its past traditions." (*A/64/PV.3*)

We thoroughly endorse such sentiments.

Our dream is for equality, for justice and for security. Our dream is for dignity and for economic well-being. Our dream is for true democracy. I thank those of our friends who have had continued dialogue with me and my Government and who have helped us to achieve what they themselves now take for granted. I thank Fiji's friends for their respect and understanding even when we agree to differ on some issues. If there is to be genuine dialogue at both the regional and the international levels, there must be a willingness to listen and to respect a different point of view.

To those nations that have refused to engage with Fiji and have expressed an unwillingness to enter into dialogue, I can only repeat my plea that they change their stance. Fiji is a small nation. Our people pose no threat to anyone, least of all to the big Powers of the South Pacific that have arrogated to themselves the right to dictate to us our future and the way we govern ourselves. We respect the right of anyone who disagrees with us to exercise their freedom. However, that does not give them the right to interfere with our efforts to build a better country for our people.

In addition to all of this, they have used their extensive diplomatic and financial resources to deny Fiji the ability to participate in new peacekeeping operations. Fiji has participated in peacekeeping operations since 1978 and is proud of its association with the United Nations, in particular with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Indeed, the Fiji Military Forces, since the beginning of their participation in peacekeeping, have established a reputation for professionalism, skill and rapport with the communities in their areas of operation.

Fiji has been disappointed by what appears to be a unilateral decision on the part of the United Nations to debar our country from any new peacekeeping operations. To this day, we have not been able to receive a clear and satisfactory reply from the Organization on this matter. I express the hope that the United Nations will deal equitably and fairly with troop-contributing countries.

Our experiences as a member of the United Nations, particularly in the area of peacekeeping, will be strengthened and enhanced by our People's Charter and the road map to the elections. Those documents aptly demonstrate the positive values of genuine dialogue and engagement. We believe that, if we are to achieve genuine peace, security and development in our country, we must build on a foundation of patience and respect for all views.

Like most small island nations, Fiji regards the threat posed by climate change as one that will undermine international peace and security. The lives of real people from real places are at stake. The future survival of real generations, the continuation of real cultures and the security of belonging to a real homeland are being threatened.

The adverse impacts of climate change will be politically blind; its devastating effects on humanity will far outweigh any ideology or system of belief devised by man. The potential casualties resulting from its impacts could be far greater than those caused by any of the battles we have ever fought. Yet the ability to reverse its onslaught is well within our collective control.

Fiji is thankful to the general membership of the Assembly for adopting, at its previous session, a resolution promoted by small island developing States linking the threat of climate change to security. Some of Fiji's closest neighbours live on the lowest-lying atolls in the world. The rise in sea level brought about by climate change threatens literally to drown them. Why should they be forced to abandon their homeland for no fault of their own? All human beings have the right to live in their ancestral homeland, if they so choose.

It is vital to understand that no measure of financial assistance can resurrect what has submerged, generate rain to end drought, reverse the effects of natural disasters or replace what has been lost as a result of climate change. No small island State can

survive the future by merely mitigating the impacts of climate change. Adaptation and mitigation are not enough. We can halt the impact of climate change and ensure the survival of island States only by significantly reducing carbon emissions.

It is on the basis of that premise that Fiji, as one of the States that are more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, calls on all nations — in particular the major emitters — to be responsible and commit themselves to the carbon emission reduction targets of approximately 45 per cent from 1990 levels by 2020 and 85 per cent by 2050, with a global atmosphere concentration of less than 350 parts per million; and, further, to limit temperature increases to less than 1.5 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial level by 2020. I wish to emphasize that, realistically, that is the minimum reduction level that will allow us to address the devastating impacts of climate change that we currently face.

To fail to meet those targets would be to make the probability of risk astoundingly high for the most vulnerable. To negotiate on those targets would mean negotiating on the lives of millions. The inequity that exists in terms of the extent of our vulnerabilities and abilities to meet mitigating costs vis-à-vis our contributions to climate change has divided our views and weakened our collective strength to deal with this global issue. Those inequitable circumstances are further complicated by the conflicting political and economic interests of States. Understandably, decisions and positions are based on national self-interests, which, in most cases, take priority over the principles of equity and responsibility.

Those are the differences that have given rise to the challenges that we currently face as an international community in arriving at a binding international agreement that responds to the current most fundamental need of the world: its survival.

Fiji hopes that political goodwill and compromise will be found on the road to Copenhagen and that the necessary platform will soon be found for a fair, effective and ambitious climate change regime that ensures significant reductions in carbon emissions and the creation of a financial regime that supports the adaptation and mitigation needs of every country, particularly the most vulnerable ones.

My Government is committed to upholding the principles and values enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other United Nations conventions. We are resolutely committed to the elimination of all policies and laws that are inconsistent with our international obligations. We wish to create a new and brighter future for our people based on equality, dignity and respect.

We seek the understanding of the General Assembly and the community of nations, as well as their support in fulfilling our dreams.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Republic of the Fiji Islands for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Josaia Bainimarama, Prime Minister of the Republic of the Fiji Islands, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Carlos Gomes Júnior, Prime Minister of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau.

Mr. Carlos Gomes Júnior, Prime Minister of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Carlos Gomes Júnior, Prime Minister of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Gomes (Guinea-Bissau) (*spoke in Portuguese; English text provided by the delegation*): My first words are to congratulate Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. Aware of his skill and his vast diplomatic experience, we are convinced that this session will be crowned with success. My country, Guinea-Bissau, which has excellent relations of friendship and cooperation with his country, Libya, welcomes his election and assures him of our fraternal cooperation during his term.

I wish to congratulate and express the appreciation of Guinea-Bissau to Father Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann for his performance and his dedication to the successful conduct of the work of the

sixty-third session. I should also like to thank the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his comprehensive report on the work of our Organization and the excellent work he has done to ensure the consolidation of peace and development throughout the world. In particular, I should like to congratulate Mr. Treki for holding the high-level gathering on climate change on 22 September as a prelude to the Copenhagen conference to be held in December.

Six months after the crisis caused by the assassination of our President, we have restored constitutional normality, and the organs of State power are in a position to fulfil the role entrusted to them by our Constitution. We have just inaugurated a new President, His Excellency Mr. Malam Bacai Sanhá, who was democratically elected in elections deemed free, fair and transparent by all political parties and candidates and by international observers.

The party that I have the honour to chair, the African Party for the Independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde, has a qualified majority in parliament and in an inclusive Government, and now the President of the Republic is from among its ranks. Never in its history has our country enjoyed such great conditions for stability. We have thus created the conditions for implementing the reforms that the country so pressingly needs, in particular, reform of the public administration, with particular emphasis on the defence and security sectors, as well as public finance reform and the decentralization and modernization of the State apparatus.

In this regard, I would like to highlight the role and contribution of subregional organizations, such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the West African Economic and Monetary Union and the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP), as well as of the African Union and the United Nations, whose constant support has allowed our Government to make substantive progress in the normalization of the country's political, economic and social life and development. I should like further to highlight the substantial support provided by the European Union during the difficult period we have gone through. In addition, I should like to thank the brothers of the CPLP countries for their continued commitment and solidarity.

The latest crisis situation in Guinea-Bissau resulted in the assassinations of the head of State and the Chief of Staff of the Guinean Armed Forces. Those tragic events surprised and shocked all of Guinean society and the international community. They revealed the vulnerabilities of our rule of law and the weaknesses of the national defence and security system.

In addition to strongly condemning those crimes, the Government immediately ordered the establishment of a committee to enable us to find out the truth and hold the perpetrators accountable. Since then, owing to its concerns about the objectivity, transparency and speed of the process, our Government made a request to the Secretary-General that an international inquiry be carried out under the auspices of the United Nations. In response to that request and on the basis of Security Council resolutions, the Secretary-General urged the Government to continue its own investigation of those crimes, offering, however, to intervene with the African Union, ECOWAS and the CPLP to provide the technical, financial and other types of support that might be necessary. Following that response from the Secretary-General, the Government sent requests for support to those organizations but has not yet received a response. The Government is truly looking forward to any assistance that can be offered by the African Union, ECOWAS and the CPLP.

We want to take advantage of our presence in New York to engage with all those organizations to ensure that conditions that would give a new dynamic to the work of the Committee of Inquiry are established, and we consider the attainment of that objective an essential condition in order to ensure genuine justice and contribute to the consolidation of the democratic rule of law and the protection and promotion of human rights. We seize this opportunity, from this rostrum, to firmly and unequivocally reaffirm that we are against impunity. We will not be a party to it, nor give safe haven to any type of crime. So I can assure you that the Government of Guinea-Bissau will do everything in its power to create the conditions for the Committee to carry out its work in a peaceful, transparent and credible manner.

Those events caused a serious crisis in my country, which led to a radical change in the priorities of Government policy — specifically, it became necessary to hold presidential elections. However, despite the gravity of the situation, the response of our

institutions was swift and positive. The President of the People's National Assembly temporarily assumed the presidency of the Republic, as provided for in the Constitution, and a date was immediately set for the holding of early presidential elections, according to the covenant of understanding among the political parties.

The tenure of the interim president, which has recently ended, was marked by the promotion of a constructive and frank dialogue between civil society and political society, with a particular focus on clarifying the objectives of the defence and security sector reform, which is a crucial pillar for peace and stability in the country.

In Guinea-Bissau, the creation of the armed forces preceded the creation of the State itself, and the latter inherited a burden of complex problems in the aftermath of the armed struggle for national liberation. As in other countries with a similar past, the problems associated with this condition are not easy to overcome, especially when facing survival issues that plague all of society. Aware of these facts, the Government held a round table discussion in Praia, Cape Verde, last May to jointly evaluate the proposed reform programme for the defence and security sectors with the help of our development partners, the United Nations, ECOWAS and the CPLP. The continuation of the reform programme in the military and security forces, within which the establishment of a Special Pensions Fund is planned, specially designed to deal with these issues, can contribute to solving those problems once and for all.

My Government has just concluded a thorough assessment of our national poverty reduction strategy. The results of this evaluation allowed us to conclude that we must strengthen our action on all the axes that define the strategy. It also enabled us, after careful consideration, to determine that the greatest impediment to the development of our country lies in the energy sector. It was concluded that the top priority should be to develop an energy plan that solves this problem definitively. We would therefore like to use this forum to ask our development partners to carry out the interim review of our poverty reduction strategy and its respective programmes as soon as possible so that we can organize, together with our partners, a round table to address the need to strengthen the technical, economic and financial cooperation programmes with our country. This round table, which we would like to organize under the title of "Reconciliation and Development", will take into account the new strategic direction advocated by the Security Council, with the transformation of the current United Nations presence in Guinea-Bissau into an integrated mission from January 2010.

I believe I am in a position to say that, by working selflessly within this framework and with the resources that we obtain, we will be better able to accomplish the Millennium Development Goals set by the United Nations, in particular with regard to the consolidation of peace and stability in our country.

We welcome with satisfaction and encourage the policy of President Obama towards Africa, as recently clarified during his visit to some African countries; it shows concern for the stability of our subregion and of the world at large, and devotes greater attention to the promotion of development. We also welcome with satisfaction the peace initiatives that are under way in the Middle East under his patronage, as well as the United States Administration's policy towards Cuba; we hope that the embargo against Cuba will be lifted in the near future.

We have been asking our development partners for many years for a post-conflict programme for Guinea-Bissau. A country with such severe shortages as ours should not be abandoned to its fate, given the profound consequences of the political-military conflict of 1998-1999, which continue to affect all socio-economic sectors of Guinea-Bissau. Guinea-Bissau, which once possessed foreign currency reserves enough to provide for six months' worth of imports and which paid regular wages to its State employees, can no longer honour its commitments because of the war.

I am therefore particularly pleased with the position of the African Development Bank, which, understanding the needs of a post-conflict country, turned an important part of the financial resources available to Guinea-Bissau into donations. Likewise, we welcome the recent decision by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to negotiate and conclude a post-conflict programme with our Government, which will soon be joining the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility, which will enhance cooperation with our key development partners. We hope this new and dynamic level of cooperation will enable us to benefit from the initiative for debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative.

I should like publicly to express our appreciation to the heads of State of the West African Economic and Monetary Union, Angola, Nigeria, the Leader and Guide of the Great Socialist Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, as well as to the CPLP and the European Union, for their support in covering our budget deficit, which has greatly contributed to the climate of peace in which we now live. Moreover, we acknowledge the presence of South Africa, Brazil and India, which have been contributing significantly to mitigating food shortages in our country through the India, Brazil and South Africa programme.

I should like to assure the General Assembly that, in bearing our responsibility for the governance of Guinea-Bissau, we shall strive to continue to merit the trust and support that the international community has granted us. We will do everything possible to enable Guinea-Bissau to make strides towards development and the well-being of its people.

We are of the opinion that the people of Guinea-Bissau themselves should seek to resolve their internal problems, especially those arising from social, political and military issues. However, one has to recognize that the reasons for the recurrence of the cyclical issues in our country are not only domestic in nature. Factors such as transnational organized crime and drug trafficking, in particular, have contributed to exacerbating the situation in Guinea-Bissau.

By taking advantage of our shortcomings in sea and land border control and in our administration structures, which are weak in some regions, and by using sophisticated means, certain groups have introduced drugs into our country with the support received from influential people in the State apparatus.

My Government is committed to participating in all programmes and initiatives adopted in the subregion of West Africa to combat drug trafficking and organized crime, as we are convinced of the need to establish mechanisms for coordination and support to fight these scourges.

We are prepared to examine the possibility of the participation of foreign forces in our country in joint surveillance missions monitoring our land and maritime borders as well as our airspace, in order to eradicate organized crime and all forms of trafficking in drugs, weapons and people, from or through the territory of Guinea-Bissau.

I would like to state before this Assembly my commitment as Prime Minister and president of the historic party founded by Amilcar Cabral, the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde, to strive to put Guinea-Bissau on the path of peace, national reconciliation and development. We will respect all the commitments made by my Government, whether related to peacebuilding, policy dialogue, poverty reduction and the creation of conditions conducive to economic growth and well-being of the Guinean people.

I ask the international community and our development partners who believe in our determination to end the cycles of crises and the recurring conflicts in Guinea-Bissau to provide a new opportunity to our country for a true partnership in favour of sustainable development.

I want to thank all the friends and partners of Guinea-Bissau for their solidarity and support. I can assure the Assembly that we will spare no efforts and will not be deterred by any obstacles in consolidating peace and political stability, promoting national unity in Guinea-Bissau and creating better living conditions for the Guinean people.

I leave this podium with a very special expression of our gratitude to all those who have contributed to this normalization, with particular attention, if you will allow me, to all of the members of the Contact Group, the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau, whose mandate was recently terminated, all members of the Security Council, as well as to the Secretary-General and his Representative in Guinea-Bissau.

However, the most sublime show of appreciation on our part would be to build a peaceful and prosperous Guinea-Bissau for all its children, which we will strive to do with all our might.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Carlos Gomes Júnior, Prime Minister of the Rep..blic of Guinea-Bissau, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by The Honourable Ratnasiri Wickramanayake, Prime Minister of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.

The Honourable Ratnasiri Wickramanayake, Prime Minister of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency The Honourable Ratnasiri Wickramanayake, Prime Minister of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Wickramanayake (Sri Lanka) (*spoke in Sinhala; English text provided by the delegation*): I take great pleasure in congratulating Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki on his assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. Sri Lanka extends its fullest cooperation to him so that we can effectively conclude the work before us.

Significant developments have taken place in Sri Lanka since my President, Mahinda Rajapaksa, addressed the sixty-third session of the General Assembly last year (see A/63/PV.7). This year I take the floor with renewed hope and optimism for my country.

In May 2009, Sri Lanka was successful in defeating the scourge of brutal terrorism after almost three decades of conflict inflicted on us by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), one of the most ruthless terrorist organizations known to the international community. Our recent anti-terrorist operations cost us only $2.8 billion in all, compared with other anti-terrorist operations elsewhere which are costing much more than that.

In an age when the international community has collectively acknowledged that terrorism threatens the very foundations of global and national security, our success in defeating terrorism will benefit, not only the people of Sri Lanka, but all our peace-loving partners in the international community.

Today, we have entered a forward-looking, post-conflict phase, recognizing at the same time the urgent need to deal with the scars and unresolved challenges of the past. In our unique victory in defeating terrorism, we are grateful for the assistance, encouragement and cooperation extended to us by friendly countries and we seek similar understanding in making a steady and stable transition from ending conflict to ensuring lasting peace and security.

We have shared our hopes and concerns with the United Nations. At the end of the conflict and at the invitation of my President, Mr. Mahinda Rajapaksa, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon was the first high-level dignitary to visit Sri Lanka.

With the defeat of the terrorists in May this year, approximately 290,000 civilians in the Vanni region were liberated from their decades-long subjugation. One of our highest priorities thereafter has been to meet the immediate humanitarian needs of these displaced civilians and to ensure their long-term, safe, voluntary and dignified return to their homes.

At present, the welfare of our people in temporary transit sites must keep up with standards that meet our own high expectations as well as accepted international norms. This task has been facilitated by the assistance we receive from United Nations agencies, international and local civil society partners and donors. More than 54 agencies are actively engaged with us in these welfare villages. In addition to providing food and transitional shelter, the welfare villages are equipped with facilities, such as schools, banks, post offices, and health-care centres, to meet the needs of the displaced civilians. In fact, children whose education had been denied them by the terrorists are now for the first time learning to read and write at these sites.

The Government reiterates its firm resolve to resettle the internally displaced persons expeditiously, in cooperation with our international partners. In that regard, we have learned valuable lessons from our own past experiences. In both the post-tsunami context and the successful resettlement programmes in the east of the country completed in the past two years, we realized that the pace of resettlement must not be forced, if it is to be truly safe and sustainable in the long term. For example, against all established humanitarian norms, the terrorist insurgents had indiscriminately scattered landmines and other explosives in every area of civilian habitation in the North. The time-consuming and meticulous process of

demining is now under way. From another perspective, the stability and security that we have restored at great human cost cannot, and must not, be compromised, particularly when a large number of self-confessed ex-terrorist cadres continue to mix with internally displaced persons.

In the aftermath of conflict, peace cannot last without reconciliation. We have put in place a broad and comprehensive foundation for long-term peace and security encompassing reconstruction, development, political empowerment and reconciliation. Sri Lanka is committed to complying with its international obligations in the field of human rights and humanitarian standards, and will undertake further domestic measures aimed at reconciliation in the light of lessons learned. In less than three months since the conflict in August, we have made significant progress. For the first time in more than a decade, local-government elections were held in the north completely free of any violence and intimidation. In every area where the terrorists had suppressed all dissent in the past, democracy will be restored and electoral processes will be re-established, encouraging a local leadership to emerge.

We must enable those scarred by the conflict to lead productive lives and resume their roles as neighbours and productive citizens. Children were forced into combat by the terrorists' abhorrent practice of using them as fighting cadres. President Mahinda Rajapaksa has personally launched a national campaign entitled "Bring Back the Child", and an extensive rehabilitation programme is under way to provide new beginnings for former child combatants. In cooperation with United Nations agencies and donors, we have put in place a national framework for the reintegration of ex-combatants.

With the end of conflict, and for the first time in many decades, Sri Lanka is poised to harness the full human, political and economic potential of the country for the betterment of our people. Donors, international organizations and financial institutions have expressed their confidence in our reconstruction and development plans by making important contributions. After a lapse of many years, the Eastern province has already begun to contribute to the national economy under the Eastern Re-awakening Programme. The Waddakin Wasantham Programme was initiated by President Rajapaksa this year to establish a strong and modern economy in the Northern province. Civilian lives are being normalized with the restoration of former livelihoods, such as farming and fisheries. Already people and produce from the north and east of the country are being transported via previously inaccessible road and rail networks, facilitating people-to-people contact and integrating the economy of the north with that of the rest of the country. Police stations, courts, schools and infrastructure are being re-established.

The end of conflict provides us with a historic opportunity to address the grievances and aspirations of all communities in expediting a long-term political solution. Under the All-Party Representative Committee process, the Government looks forward with a high degree of confidence to obtaining a consensus among all sections of the political spectrum on the proposals envisaged in this regard. The solution that evolves through this process, which we will offer to all communities, must be a home-grown product. Complementary to the long-term political solution envisaged through the All-Party Representative Committee process, an All-Party Committee of Development and Reconciliation has been initiated by President Rajapaksa. That forum reflects the Government's commitment to a pluralistic and inclusive approach to addressing post-conflict challenges.

The theme of this year's debate is "Effective responses to global crises — strengthening multilateralism and dialogue among civilizations for international peace, security and development". The multilateral architecture of the United Nations was created 64 years ago to provide a collective response to global issues in order to achieve peace, security and development. As a result of a multitude of factors, including the accelerated globalization of recent decades, the challenges we are confronted with today are complex and intertwined, and require a holistic, concerted and collective approach.

An individual State alone cannot meet these challenges. Thus multilateralism must be strengthened to meet contemporary global crises such as terrorism, the global financial crisis, the adverse consequences of climate change, food and energy security as well as the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. We need to take necessary measures to ensure that the impact of globalization is fair, inclusive and sustainable. Multilateralism is not about the United Nations agenda responding only to the demands of a minority of powerful States, but also about defending

the interests of the powerless majority. And it is imperative that the principle reflected in Article 2, paragraph 7, of the Charter — that the Organization should not interfere in the internal affairs of States — be respected. The Charter must be our guiding norm, for it is the Charter that keeps us together. Non-interference in the internal affairs of States must be respected at all times.

In our own region, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), which Sri Lanka chairs at present, has lent its voice to several issues of global importance affecting our region. Among these, terrorism, the impact of the global economic crisis and climate change, as well as food security, are of prime concern to the one fifth of humanity who live in SAARC nations. We in the SAARC region will continue to work in every international forum, including the United Nations, to find regional as well as global solutions that can deal with these issues in an equitable manner.

A global problem such as terrorism, with its transnational linkages, requires an effective and compelling global response. As our experience in Sri Lanka has shown, the transnational character of criminal activities of terrorist groups such as the LTTE required that counter-terrorism operations meticulously carried out on the battlefield be supported by concerted and well-coordinated measures of international cooperation directed against the multifaceted criminal networks of the terrorist organizations.

Mrs. Aitimova (Kazakhstan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

We are aware that much of the financial sustenance for the destruction caused in Sri Lanka by the LTTE came from sources overseas, particularly deep-rooted networks in developed countries. The so-called overseas representatives of the LTTE and their front organizations procured funds and arms through a complex range of criminal activities: terrorist financing, money-laundering, arms procurement, illicit trade and other organized criminal activities, such as drug trafficking and human trafficking, all of which are interrelated.

The remnants of the fast-diminishing LTTE networks overseas continue those efforts to date. Although we have been successful in defeating terrorism in Sri Lanka, we continue to urge our friends and partners in the international community to be vigilant and to continue taking action against illegal acts of the LTTE on their soil.

We are well aware that some of the front organizations exploit noble humanitarian sentiments, and masquerade in the guise of humanitarian non-governmental organizations or even infiltrate them. We thank our partners in the international community that have taken action to expose those organizations.

The threat posed to maritime security through the transportation of large consignments of sophisticated equipment and lethal cargo to provide logistical support to terrorist groups requires our urgent attention. In recent years, Sri Lanka has experienced the most unprecedented and dangerous forms of maritime terrorism. Our navy has successfully confronted and interdicted the movement of virtual floating warehouses of arms and ammunition, which posed a grave threat to the security and stability of our nation and our region.

At the global level, this phenomenon calls for a revision of existing laws pertaining to boarding and searching vessels on the high seas. We need a comprehensive legal framework to address all aspects of the safety and security of maritime navigation, going beyond the current concerns about weapons of mass destruction. That would make a distinct contribution to securing global peace and security.

The comprehensive range of terrorist activities and their disastrous impact on the security and stability of States should awaken all States to consider, very seriously and as a matter of urgency, the importance of forging a global consensus on a comprehensive normative framework for international cooperation and solidarity in combating terrorism, within the parameters of international law.

In this context, I wish to emphasize the urgent need to finalize the ongoing negotiations on the draft comprehensive convention on terrorism. The time has come to reach finality on the outstanding issues and, through the exertion of the necessary political will, to adopt the Convention without further delay.

Sri Lanka, as Chairman of the United Nations Ad Hoc Committee on International Terrorism, remains committed to doing its utmost to reach consensus on the draft comprehensive convention, and looks forward

to the fullest support of all Member States in this important task.

Today we face the greatest challenge to the world economy in modern times. The global financial and economic crisis, which had its roots in the developed countries, will have a long-term impact on human lives in developing countries. Through the pursuit of prudent policies, Sri Lanka has been able to minimize the impact of the crisis on the domestic financial system and maintain an overall positive rate of growth in the midst of the crisis.

Recovery from the crisis should go well beyond restoring the stability of the economies of the developed countries, and must address the deeper development crisis which ensued in developing countries. The plan of action adopted at the United Nations Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and its Impact on Development urgently needs to be implemented with the support of the international financial institutions and advanced economies. The global financial and economic crisis also highlights the need for transparent multilateral regulatory structures at the helm of the world economy.

The Millennium Declaration set 2015 as the target date for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and we are already nearing the target date. Long before the MDGs were articulated globally, Sri Lanka was well on track to reach the related targets in several areas.

Development as it is understood today, and as embodied in the internationally agreed development goals and MDGs, encompasses objectives related to human well-being, including freedom, empowerment, distribution patterns and environmental sustainability. This broad dimension is aligned with Sri Lanka's pluralistic democratic traditions. Sri Lanka was early among developing countries to understand the importance of investing in human resources, of gender equality and of social development. We are determined to make further progress. We welcome the high-level meeting to be convened by the Secretary-General next year.

As a developing island State, Sri Lanka is highly vulnerable to the adverse impact of climate change caused by unsustainable production and consumption patterns of industrialized countries. The carbon debt owed to us by the developed countries must be used to finance the financial and technological assistance that we need in order to adapt our industries to a sustainable path. As the people of a developing country, our population naturally aspires to achieve progress and higher living standards. We hope that we can reach an agreed outcome at the Copenhagen Conference, in accordance with the principle of common, but differentiated, responsibilities.

Reform of the United Nations and the Security Council must be a high priority. My delegation believes that the objectives of the reform process should be to strengthen multilateralism and to promote greater democracy, transparency, effectiveness and accountability within a more democratic United Nations system. And, in tandem, we need to take measures to pursue the four pillars that are fundamental to our future, as enunciated by President Obama.

My delegation believes that the United Nations — particularly the Assembly — has primary responsibility, as set out in the Charter, for the maintenance of international peace and security. In this context, the numerous unresolved conflicts around the world continue to be a matter of concern.

We are disappointed that little progress has been made in the implementation of General Assembly resolutions regarding the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to statehood and the realization of the two-State solution, whereby Israel and Palestine could live side-by-side in peace and harmony. A just and lasting peace in the Middle East, including through practical recognition of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, has been strongly advocated by President Mahinda Rajapaksa. In this regard, we are encouraged by the words spoken by President Obama in his address to the Assembly.

Mr. Treki is presiding over the work of the Assembly at a critical time. As Member States, we must mobilize the political will to shed our differences and work in a spirit of cooperation to respond effectively and swiftly to the challenges that confront us. I reiterate my delegation's confidence in President Treki's leadership in this endeavour.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minster of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka for the statement he has just made.

The Honourable Ratnasiri Wickramanayake, Prime Minister of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, was escorted from the rostrum.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Hor Namhong, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Cambodia.

Mr. Hor Namhong (Cambodia): First, I echo previous speakers in warmly congratulating Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, of the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, on his election to preside over the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. I am confident that under the able stewardship of Mr. Treki, a veteran of the United Nations, the Assembly will make significant progress on many critical issues of common concern.

Our tribute also goes to Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, of Nicaragua, who successfully presided over the General Assembly at its sixty-third session.

Everyone is concerned today about the considerable challenges that our world confronts, challenges such as the current global economic and financial crisis, climate change, food and energy insecurity, and the threats of terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. I hope that in its deliberations the Assembly will come up with new ideas to cope with those global challenges.

There is no doubt that the present global economic and financial crisis will go down in history as a landmark case of world economic meltdown. This global crisis has clearly undermined the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). While the developed countries have more possibilities and resources to cope with the slowdown, the developing countries have suffered the most, with huge losses of national income, as their economic growth is expected to fall sharply due to a drastic reduction in exports, which they have largely depended on, falling investments, rising unemployment and so forth.

In order to help mitigate the impact of this economic and financial disaster on developing countries, we should do everything possible to get the Doha Round negotiations back on track for a successful conclusion in order to break down barriers to trade, improve market access, particularly in agricultural goods, and reduce agricultural subsidies.

In this regard, Cambodia greatly appreciates the commitment that the Group of 20 (G-20) made in Pittsburgh, just two days ago, to "bringing the Doha Round to a successful conclusion in 2010". At the same time, the Monterrey Consensus should be invigorated in order to help developing countries to alleviate poverty and meet the MDGs.

Under these terrible circumstances, we warmly welcome the G-20's commitment, made in London in April 2009, to address the impact of the global financial crisis with the injection of $50 billion to support social protection, boost trade and sustain development in low-income countries, and with an additional $6 billion concessional and flexible financing over the next two or three years for social protection, including through investing in long-term food security in the poorest countries.

Today, everyone in the world is increasingly concerned about climate change, which is another very serious threat to humanity. Global warming has triggered more and more frequent cyclones, typhoons, extreme floods and droughts. Our planet is now confronted, more than ever, with increasing natural disasters. The worsening impact of climate change has now reached an alarming level everywhere around the planet. The shrinking of the Arctic summer sea ice should be an alarm signal for everyone that global warming is inexorably advancing, and with perilous speed.

South-East Asia, according to the Asian Development Bank (ADB), will be the most affected region. Its vulnerability to climate change is largely a result of its geography, with low-lying nations and long coastlines. The negative impact of climate change on farming in South-East Asia would seriously jeopardize the production of rice and other agricultural products, and consequently would have ripple effects on food security, as South-East Asia is one of the world's most important rice crop regions.

Based on the estimate by the ADB, the total cost of loss in agricultural production and other negative aspects of climate change would be equivalent to as much as 6.7 per cent of the region's gross domestic product compared with the 2.6 per cent loss estimated for the world as a whole.

Cambodia is essentially an agrarian country, with the livelihood of more than 80 per cent of its population depending on farming. Therefore, it is very

vulnerable to weather-related disasters. Fully aware of that danger and the serious consequences of climate change and global warming for the well-being, livelihoods and development of peoples around the world, Cambodia has been assuming its share of responsibility in the matter of global warming since 2003.

We have made the utmost effort to implement the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol by promoting Clean Development Mechanism projects and implementing our National Adaptation Programme of Action on climate change.

We have also launched a major campaign of reforestation all over the country; more than 49,000 hectares of trees have been planted. We have also banned timber exports.

In this context, Cambodia warmly welcomes the recent United States initiative to engage with the lower Mekong basin countries by sharing with the Mekong countries its best practices and experience on climate change and flood and water resource management. At the same time, the Mekong countries and Japan are now looking into an approach for the future to achieve sustainable development of the Mekong basin potential, with better respect for the environment of the mighty Mekong River.

Furthermore, Cambodia commends the recent promise of the Group of Eight (G-8) at its summit in July to work towards an 80 per cent reduction in heat-trapping pollution by 2050. Nonetheless, since climate change is evolving steadily with time, we may question whether the pledged reduction can match the speed of global warming. I believe that the industrialized countries, which produce 80 per cent of the greenhouse gases, should share greater responsibility and take more drastic and urgent measures to reduce emissions of those deadly gases.

Governments around the world have just over three months to craft a new treaty to deal with global warming. It will be a historic treaty for generations to come. The United Nations Climate Change Conference to be held in Denmark in December could secure a milestone plan to really slow down climate change for the safety of all humankind. Therefore, Cambodia believes that all countries and all actors should join hands to reach an agreement in Copenhagen in December. The international community has an obligation to roll back global temperatures before it is too late. The future generations of our children and grandchildren are at stake.

I turn to the subject of food and energy security. The sharp increase in oil prices last year prompted a number of countries to turn to the production of bioenergy crops as an alternative source of energy, thus reducing the available cultivated land, while the world's population continued to grow day by day, increasing demand for food. The combination of those realities underlines the importance of a comprehensive approach to tackle the planet's food crisis.

The challenge we now confront is, on the one hand, how to produce enough food to feed the growing world population, and, on the other hand, how to respond to the increased need for clean energy to save the global environment and stop the advancing climate change. The solution to this twin problem is to find a balanced approach between food crop and bioenergy culture, and to develop alternative energy sources to meet the growing demand. We should avoid any short-term solution to the energy problem that would have harmful consequences for food security worldwide in the long term.

Finally, Cambodia welcomes the outcome of the G-8 meeting in L'Aquila, Italy, with the commitment to mobilize $20 billion over the next three years to support agricultural production in poor countries. We hope that the commitment will be translated into concrete and timely action.

In parallel to all the serious global challenges that I have mentioned, there remain political and security problems causing great concern. Terrorism is a threat everywhere and has caused the death of innocent people. To fight terrorism more effectively, we need stronger and closer cooperation between the many authorities concerned in order to face up to such criminal acts against humanity. Moreover, some countries with the capacity to produce nuclear weapons have not yet signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

The dissemination of weapons of mass destruction constitutes another massive, deadly menace to humanity. In this context, Cambodia highly values the call by United States President Obama on 23 September to "stop the spread of nuclear weapons and seek the goal of a world without them" (*A/64/PV.3*). Cambodia also warmly welcomes the

Security Council's resolve, expressed at its summit (see S/PV.6191) on 24 September, "to seek a safer world for all" (*Security Council resolution 1887 (2009), first preambular paragraph*).

Within the framework of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), we have the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone, which is an important instrument to keep South-East Asia free of nuclear weapons in order to ensure peace and security in that part of the world. It is also a good confidence-building mechanism, which needs to be adhered to by all, especially the nuclear-weapon States. In recent years ASEAN has actively encouraged the nuclear-weapon States to accede to the Treaty, but there has been no concrete result or effect yet. Here also we appeal to all nuclear-weapon States to engage more constructively with the Treaty.

I come now to the Korean Peninsula issue. We are all concerned about the rising tension in that part of the world, which can affect peace and security in the region. Cambodia urges all parties concerned to exercise the utmost restraint and re-engage in peaceful negotiations in the six-party talks aimed at the early denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. We should call upon the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to keep in mind that the six-party talks remain an appropriate forum to contribute to the settlement of the overall problem in the Korean Peninsula.

While talking about threats to international peace and security, we should also keep an eye on the Middle East situation. The never-ending cycle of violence of the Israel-Palestine conflict must be broken. One of the most pressing issues is to achieve a just, comprehensive and sustainable solution to the problem of Palestine in accordance with the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and the relevant Security Council resolutions. Cambodia strongly urges all parties involved to cease using military force and violence, in order to foster a peaceful and lasting settlement through the establishment of a State of Palestine living side by side with the State of Israel in a spirit of peaceful coexistence and close cooperation between the two peoples.

Before concluding, I should like to say a few words about United Nations reform. For many years now, almost all delegations to the General Assembly have voiced their demand for reform of the United Nations. But when it was time to act a conflict of interest arose. In my view, the reform of the United Nations should be in the interest of peace, security and development for the whole international community, and not just the particular interests of a country. The reform should also go beyond the restructuring of the United Nations organs, in order to enable this world body to engage itself more actively in revitalizing the primary role of the United Nations in world affairs.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency The Honourable Kenneth Baugh, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Jamaica.

Mr. Baugh (Jamaica): I join other speakers in congratulating Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki on assuming the presidency of the Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. We are confident that his extensive diplomatic experience will guide his leadership. He can be assured of the support and cooperation of Jamaica during his tenure.

I also extend Jamaica's appreciation to Father Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann for his energetic and visible leadership during the sixty-third session of the Assembly, and our gratitude to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his expert leadership of the Organization.

We meet at a critical juncture, as the world confronts multiple crises: the global financial and economic crisis and the food, energy and climate crises, joined by the H1N1 pandemic. Both developed and developing countries are affected by these crises. It is the poorest and most vulnerable, however, that are disproportionately affected and are least capable of responding. Even as major economies are reporting their emergence from the global recession, the outlook for most developing countries remains bleak. For many developing countries, there are no early signs of so-called green shoots of economic recovery. For the majority, the impact of the recession will be deep; it will be prolonged; and it will be painful. The irony is that developing countries are hapless victims of a crisis for which they are inculpable.

The synchronized nature of the downturn in the world economy means that its repercussions are evident in virtually every sphere. Inflows of financing and investment have plunged precipitously; exports are weak, and commodity prices are low; official development assistance has diminished drastically.

Those consequences are reflected in Jamaica and throughout the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) region. Countries like ours now face the daunting challenge of protecting the most vulnerable of their citizens in a responsible and sustainable manner in the context of declining export demand, contraction in services, including tourism, and lower remittances. As with most developing countries, the fiscal and financial stress has forced us to make significant adjustments to our expenditure programmes.

The distressing reality is that we in the developing world have limited scope and capacity to mitigate the impact of the crisis. We have neither the fiscal flexibility nor the policy space to afford ambitious stimulus packages to respond effectively to the upheavals in our country.

A major corollary of the economic downturn is the problem of debt servicing and debt sustainability. Many developing countries could be on the verge of a debt crisis, and require special support to help them attenuate the impact of the global crisis.

Jamaica has always supported efforts to assist the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries that have benefited from debt relief initiatives. But there is another group of developing countries that are equally burdened by high debt and deserving of special consideration. I speak of the heavily indebted lower-middle-income countries, which are overlooked on the presumption that, by virtue of their levels of gross domestic product (GDP) per capita, they do not require international assistance. That approach continues to mask the reality of our vulnerability to external shocks, persistently high levels of poverty and dependence on commodity exports.

Jamaica is particularly concerned about the situation of highly indebted middle-income countries, which cannot benefit from the kind of assistance available to the Least Developed Countries and Heavily Indebted Poor Countries, but which have been devastated by the impact of the global economic and financial crisis. Jamaica is currently saddled with a debt-to-GDP ratio of 125 per cent. Along with our CARICOM partners, we will continue to advocate for a very special category of small, vulnerable and highly indebted middle-income countries. A review of the criteria for determining middle-income status could help to address financial resource accessibility in the long term. We are lobbying for a review of those criteria.

The pervasiveness of the crisis makes coordinated international action imperative. Over the last two days in Pittsburgh, leaders of the Group of 20 (G-20) met for the third time in less than a year to review the progress on commitments made at their last summit and chart a course to counter the impact of the adverse economic environment. As much as we value the inclusion of advanced developing countries in the G-20 process, we believe that it is critical that space be made to accommodate the voices of a wider cross-section of developing countries, particularly the most vulnerable. Our interest is in ensuring that the particular needs of small, vulnerable economies and highly indebted middle-income developing countries of the CARICOM subregion are addressed through appropriate representation at the summits of the G-20. We must have an integrated approach in order to craft the type of common strategy that a crisis of this magnitude demands.

At the same time, the United Nations must play an essential role in helping to manage the various ramifications of the crisis. It can ensure dialogue and enable a coordinated response based on an inclusive decision-making process. The United Nations Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and its Impact on Development, held in June, provided a useful platform. Developing countries that are not part of the G-20 group were able to bring their concerns to the international community and contribute to the search for solutions to the crisis.

We are encouraged by the candour of leaders from the major industrialized countries who expressed their commitment, with obvious sincerity, to effectively addressing the concerns of developing countries in order to help them cope with the crisis. We are seized with a spirit of collectivity, and hope that this renewed momentum will overcome all obstacles and translate into tangible, targeted outcomes.

The severity and complexity of the crisis is underpinned by the interlinked and interdependent nature of the global financial system. The experience of the current crisis supports the case for strengthening financial regulation and supervision to address systemic weaknesses in the global financial system.

Reform of the international financial architecture is long overdue. Urgent steps must be taken to reform

the governance structure of the international financial institutions, including a review of the policy conditions attached to lending by the International Monetary Fund. We are disappointed that there is as yet no visible action on reform of the international monetary and financial systems.

Jamaica is a trade-dependent country. We therefore agree that there is an urgent need to conclude the Doha Round of negotiations in a bid to revive global trade and to aid in global economic recovery. Development must remain central to that agenda. Any outcome of our negotiations in the Doha Development Round must lead to clear benefits for our farmers, producers, exporters and consumers. We must redouble our efforts in this critical area and resolve to transform international trade into an engine of growth.

Progress has been made in the implementation of Aid for Trade for developing countries. We must build on that progress. There are outstanding commitments with respect to the provision of technical and financial support to help strengthen the trading and production capacities of developing countries. We look forward to further collaboration with our international partners and aid and development organizations in pushing the Aid for Trade initiative to build on the supply-side capacity and infrastructure of developing countries, so that they can take advantage of trade opportunities and connections with the global economy, particularly against the backdrop of this global recession.

The threat posed by climate change must not be underestimated. Urgent and effective global action on climate change mitigation and adaptation is required to avoid the catastrophic consequences of global warming.

The Alliance of Small Island States Climate Change Summit on 21 September, as well as the Summit on Climate Change held here a few days ago, reinforced this fact: the time for action is now. We were heartened by the broad agreement that a significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions is necessary to reduce global warming. What is now required is the necessary political will to take concrete, decisive action so that we can address this clear and present danger head on.

As a Small Island Developing State that is vulnerable to the impact of climate change, Jamaica has a vested interest in a successful outcome of the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen in December — an outcome based on equity and differentiated burden-sharing. It is now clearly established that developed country emitters have a historical responsibility for global warming and that they should take the lead in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Other major emitters also have a role to play in climate change mitigation while taking into account their own development needs. To this end, we favour the conclusion of a post-Kyoto framework wherein the commitments agreed to by all the parties hold to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. A successful outcome must also include concrete commitments on adaptation, mitigation, capacity-building, technology transfers and the provision of financial resources to assist developing countries in addressing climate change.

We recognize that action at the international level must be complemented by urgent action at the national and regional levels. The necessary steps must be taken to integrate climate change into broader national sustainable development planning. Jamaica has embraced this approach.

The pursuit of complete disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, with particular regard to weapons of mass destruction, must remain a shared goal. The 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty provides an opportunity for renewed commitment to strengthen the non-proliferation regime.

Restoring peace and promoting regional stability through peacekeeping operations is at the heart of the contribution of the United Nations to international peace and security. However, as we have seen, peacekeeping interventions cannot by themselves produce the desired outcome of sustainable peace. The Peacebuilding Commission, established in 2006, can assure such sustainability and make a difference in the lives of people in post-conflict countries. We are therefore pleased that new arrangements have been put in place to make the Peacebuilding Fund more flexible as we seek to support peace efforts in countries emerging from conflict.

In my own region, Jamaica remains committed to the long-term stability, socio-economic growth and development of our sister country, Haiti. We recognize the important role of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) in helping to foster the

environment necessary to ensure a sustainable future for the Haitian people.

We must increase our efforts to counter transnational organized crime, narco-trafficking and the illicit trade in small arms and ammunition, which threaten the rule of law and democratic governance in many countries, and fuel the spread of international terrorism. At the regional level, through joint collaboration and approaches within CARICOM, we continue to tackle these security challenges, which threaten the social and economic fabric of our societies.

The challenges presented by the outbreak of infectious diseases and the potential pandemics, such as HIV/AIDS and the H1N1 flu, call for common global strategies to ensure that developed and developing countries alike can respond rapidly and effectively. As a result of the global economic crisis, accessibility and affordability of essential medicines are expected to deteriorate in developing countries. In this regard, however, it is anticipated that developing countries will have access to the forthcoming H1N1 vaccine at an affordable price.

We end this first decade of the twenty-first century confronted by myriad challenges. These challenges are not constrained by borders and cannot be confronted by States acting on their own. They can only be confronted through international cooperation and effective partnerships. But this can only be achieved through greater multilateralism, with equitable participation by all countries, both developed and developing.

Jamaica firmly believes that the United Nations is the only organization equipped to undertake this task of inclusive multilateralism. With all its imperfections, the United Nations still enjoys legitimacy in the eyes of most people in the world. But the United Nations cannot, in its current form and structure, successfully tackle this task. It must be reformed to make it more responsive to all its Members.

Multilateralism cannot work effectively if the General Assembly, the most representative global body, is unable to assert itself as the central decision-making body of the Organization. Nor can it work if the Security Council remains an exclusive club, unrepresentative of the wider membership of the United Nations. The goal of the intergovernmental negotiations which commenced earlier this year should be to come to a definitive conclusion on comprehensive reform of the Council.

The theme that the President has chosen for this session is both apt and timely. It evokes the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter. It calls on us to reaffirm and renew our commitment to joint responsibility for development, the realization of peace and security and harmony among peoples. It is in this spirit that we look forward to the erection of the permanent memorial to honour the victims of the transatlantic slave trade, which will remain an enduring symbol of our collective resolve to eliminate discrimination, social inequity and prejudice.

The United Nations must assert its unique capability as the world's premier multinational organization to address the challenges and meet the needs of the poor and most vulnerable. We need, therefore, to urgently correct and reverse the tendency towards inaction, inertia and indifference which has so far frustrated efforts to address the development agenda. This would be in keeping with the ideals of the Charter and our shared vision for the fulfilment of the hopes, aspirations and expectations of all our citizens across the globe. We dare not fail to live up to those expectations, as to do otherwise would seriously impair the very credibility and relevance of the United Nations, particularly during this time of crisis.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Michael Spindelegger, Federal Minister for European and International Affairs of Austria.

Mr. Spindelegger (Austria): This has been a truly remarkable week, remarkable for the leadership shown by the Secretary-General on climate change, the new policies of President Obama, which he so eloquently set out before us, the constructive responses to those initiatives from many parts of the world and the historic meeting of the Security Council, which committed itself to a world without nuclear weapons. We have all witnessed something new and different: a genuine opportunity for a real renaissance of multilateralism.

There is a real chance to turn the United Nations once again into what was originally envisaged in the Charter: not just a forum for discussion, but a place for action, the central focal point of the efforts of the international community to find common solutions to common challenges. It will depend on each and every Member of the Organization to make sure that this

historic opportunity is seized. Cooperation is not a mere option, but an indispensable necessity, if we want to succeed.

Together, we must build a world based on predictable and equitable rules applicable to every Member, big or small, strong or weak. Adherence to the rule of law and the principles of the Charter is critical to conflict prevention, stability and sustainable long-term development.

A year ago, Member States entrusted my country with a seat on the Security Council for the years 2009-2010. We take that responsibility very seriously.

One important focus of our work in the Council is to improve the protection of civilians in armed conflict. Despite significant progress, armed conflicts continue to darken the lives of men, women and children in many parts of the world.

Austria has been working actively with others on expanding the monitoring and reporting of serious violations of children's rights. Austria fully supports Security Council resolution 1820 (2008) and the follow-up resolution to be adopted next week as a decisive response by the international community to sexual violence in conflict situations. At the same time, Austria attaches great importance to the participation of women in the promotion of peace and security. Women must have a voice in every peace process throughout the world.

But many challenges remain. How can we improve the protection of civilians on the ground, in particular in situations in which the Council has provided peacekeeping operations with a clear protection mandate? How can we ensure better compliance by parties to conflict with their obligations under international humanitarian law — for instance, to allow full access for humanitarian assistance? We will therefore use our Security Council presidency in November to identify concrete measures to improve the protection of civilians. In order to do so, I invite all partners to join me in an open debate on 13 November. I am pleased that the Secretary-General has agreed to participate.

In recent years, several peacekeeping missions — such as the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo — have been mandated by the Council to ensure the physical protection of the civilian population.

Its role of providing protection to refugees and internally displaced persons was a strong factor in Austria's decision to contribute troops to the European Union and United Nations Missions in Chad and the Central African Republic. Austria has also contributed to the United Nations study analysing experience in the implementation of such protection mandates in peace operations. We thus hope to contribute to the overall efforts to reform United Nations peacekeeping. Our aim must be to have more effective and better-resourced peacekeeping missions that are in a position to implement their mandates in a credible and consistent manner.

To achieve sustainable peace, security and development, peacekeeping must be complemented by the rebuilding of functioning institutions, particularly in the judiciary and the security sector. In that context, we commend the efforts of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in combating corruption, organized crime and drug trafficking.

The Peacebuilding Commission is a new form of partnership between countries emerging from conflict, donors and main providers of personnel to United Nations missions to ensure that support is tailored to specific local needs. Austria is committed to the work of the Peacebuilding Commission, and has recently joined the country-specific configuration for Sierra Leone, a model case for successful peacebuilding.

Sustainable peace can be achieved only when a society also addresses its past. The establishment of effective justice and reconciliation mechanisms at the national level is crucial to end impunity and to ensure the rights of victims. Such efforts can be complemented by international criminal justice mechanisms, such as the ad hoc tribunals and the International Criminal Court.

Peace, security and stability are preconditions for sustainable development. Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger continues to be one of the main challenges facing the international community. Achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 is far from assured. In view of the global financial crisis, increased efforts by the international community are urgently needed. Austria will contribute its share to that global endeavour.

All those efforts will be in vain if we are unable to protect our planet. Climate change is a fundamental threat to humankind, aggravating poverty, hunger,

environmental degradation and insecurity, and thus seriously threatening the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The United Nations Climate Change Conference to be held in Copenhagen in December must decide on concrete actions to curb climate change on the basis of mutual trust and strong international cooperation.

Climate and energy measures can also be an important part of our response to the current economic crisis. Investments in green technologies and sustainable, affordable and stable energy supplies will benefit both the economy and the climate.

The Security Council summit on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament held earlier this week issued a strong call for a world free of nuclear weapons. For that vision to become reality, we need progress on several fronts.

Austria, as Co-Chair, together with Costa Rica, of the 2007 Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and co-leader of the process for the past two years, is proud to have contributed to bringing the Treaty closer to entering into force.

As current Chair of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, Austria is working hard to translate the recent positive momentum into substantial progress, especially on a verifiable fissile material cut-off treaty.

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty must be reinforced. The Review Conference of Parties to the Treaty to be held next year will have to agree on a package of measures and procedures that address the key issues, but most of all it will need to build trust and confidence.

Let me continue with three short remarks on conventional disarmament.

First, I appeal to all States to make a success of the Second Review Conference of the Ottawa Landmines Ban Convention, to be held in Colombia in December, and, in particular, to ensure improved assistance to victims.

Secondly, I welcome the growing support for the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which Austria ratified in April. We appeal to all other States to sign and ratify it as soon as possible.

Thirdly, we must counter the illegal proliferation of small arms and light weapons. An arms trade treaty would be an important step in that regard. Hoping to contribute to speedy negotiations, Austria will host an international conference in Vienna in February next year.

With regard to the Iranian nuclear programme, it is indispensable that Iran fully comply with all relevant Security Council resolutions and closely cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency. The most recent announcement by the Government of Iran concerning an additional enrichment facility is discouraging and further increases our concern.

As an important regional actor, Iran has the responsibility to contribute to peace and security in the area. The time has now come for Iran to finally enter into a constructive dialogue with the international community. Iran should therefore grasp the hand extended by its international partners and engage in genuine and serious negotiations. The debates during this week have clearly shown that the world will not accept an Iran armed with nuclear weapons.

Let me also underline that Austria firmly rejects the unacceptable remarks made by President Ahmadinejad during his speech on Wednesday. We reject any abuse of the United Nations General Assembly as a platform for intolerance, anti-Semitism, and racial hatred.

Mr. Grauls (Belgium), Vice-President took the Chair.

Regarding the Middle East, we saw this week's summit between President Obama, Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Abbas as a sign of hope. We appeal to the parties to remove any remaining obstacles to the early resumption of negotiations.

After decades of hostility and violence, time has come to move decisively forward. Israel's right to exist in security and peace and the realization of the rights of the Palestinian people to their own State are not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, they are both crucial elements of a comprehensive and just solution.

Austria will continue to help establish the economic foundation and the institutional infrastructure of a future Palestine State. It will also, within the framework of the European Union, contribute to the efforts to promote a dynamic and results-oriented peace process.

International cooperation and dialogue are the basis for sustainable peace and development. Only by closely working together will we be able to successfully address the many challenges of today's globalized world. We therefore appreciate President Treki's initiative to make the need for dialogue a main theme of this week's debate. Situated in the heart of Europe, and for most of its history at the crossroads of different cultures, religions and political systems, Austria has developed a practice of constructive dialogue as the host country of one of the seats of the United Nations for the past three decades.

I have made it one of my foreign policy priorities to position Austria even more firmly as a platform for peace and dialogue. We stand ready to host international negotiations and provide our services, as we did most recently for the informal talks on Western Sahara. Austria can be counted on to be a partner in translating the words, ideas and initiatives of this week into concrete action.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Highness Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates.

Sheikh Al Nahyan (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): Since the last session of the General Assembly, we have witnessed various actions and developments that have left their negative impact on international joint efforts to address the threats and challenges that still face our world, particularly in the areas of security, stability and sustainable development.

Among the most notable implications of those challenges, whose consequences transcend national borders, are the international financial crisis, deterioration of the environment, the increase in unemployment and poverty, the outbreaks of infectious diseases, lack of security and stability in a number of countries, and the stalemate in the Middle East peace process.

The United Arab Emirates would like to seize this opportunity to express its pride that the international community has selected Masdar City in Abu Dhabi as a seat for the International Renewable Energy Agency. In that context, we renew our commitment and readiness to cooperate fully in providing all facilities and technical resources required for the success of this international agency.

We wish to stress that the United Arab Emirates' interest in developing a programme for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy stems from its desire to meet its growing energy needs in the future. By developing a peaceful nuclear energy model that complies with the highest standards of operational transparency while fulfilling the highest requirements of nuclear safety and security and non-proliferation, in cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency and other responsible and experienced States, the United Arab Emirates hopes that a new course will be charted for the safe and beneficial use of nuclear energy.

The United Arab Emirates' commitment not to enrich uranium and reprocess fuels locally is among the most salient features of this model, which is one supported by enhanced international transparency and cooperation mechanisms.

The United Arab Emirates renews in this forum its disappointment at the continued occupation by the Islamic Republic of Iran of the three United Arab Emirates islands: Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa since 1971. The United Arab Emirates demands the return of those islands under conditions of full sovereignty, including their regional waters, airspace, continental shelf and their exclusive economic zone as integral parts of the national sovereignty of the United Arab Emirates.

The United Arab Emirates also affirms that all military and administrative measures taken by the Iranian Government on those islands are null and void and have no legal effect, regardless of how long the occupation might last. In that context, we call upon the international community to urge Iran to respond to the peaceful and sincere initiatives of the United Arab Emirates. These initiatives were supported and adopted by the Gulf Cooperation Council and the League of Arab States, and they call for a just settlement of that issue.

This could be done either through direct and serious negotiations between the two countries or by referring the issue to the International Court of Justice, in accordance with the United Nations Charter and the provisions of international law.

We also hope that the Iranian Government will respond positively and fairly to this sensitive and important issue. Such action would strengthen good-neighbourly relations and create a base for confidence-building measures in the Arab Gulf region.

We note with satisfaction the gradual withdrawal of foreign troops from Iraq and the extension of the national authority of its Government over all its territory. In this context, we reaffirm our long-standing support to the people and the Government of Iraq. In particular, we support their efforts to expedite the rebuilding of their security, legislative and economic institutions as well as their efforts to achieve national reconciliation.

However, we are also deeply concerned at the deteriorating security and humanitarian situation in Iraq, and we strongly condemn the recent terrorist bombings in that brotherly country. In that context, we call for respect for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Iraq and non-intervention in its internal affairs. Its Arab and Islamic identity must be upheld; we condemn all attempts to divide or dismember the Iraqi State.

The United Arab Emirates expresses its disappointment at the state of the peace process in the Middle East, which has deteriorated owing to continuing Israeli aggression against and occupation of Palestinian and Arab territories. This includes the harsh blockade imposed on the Palestinian people, in particular in Gaza, the ongoing confiscation of land, property and homes of the Palestinian people, and the building of more settlements and the separation wall in the occupied territories. That is all carried out with a view to Judaizing occupied East Jerusalem and changing its Arab identity in flagrant violation of international law and resolutions of international legitimacy.

The United Arab Emirates welcomed the positive positions expressed by United States President Barack Obama in this Hall on 23 September. We believe that his address (see A/64/PV.3) set out a firm basis for negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israeli Government. We hope that Mr. Obama will continue to closely pursue that important issue.

We also welcome the cautious positions stated by the European Union, the other members of the Quartet and the international community regarding the Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories. However, we believe that those positions are not sufficient. More effective efforts are needed in order to resume serious negotiations with the Palestinian Authority.

In that context, we emphasize that the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East requires an end to the Israeli occupation of all occupied Arab and Palestinian territories and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, with Al-Quds as its capital, based on the principle of land for peace and in accordance with the Arab Peace Initiative and resolutions of international legitimacy.

The United Arab Emirates will continue to stand by the Palestinian National Authority and the Palestinian people and to support their just cause. In that context, we commend His Excellency President Mahmoud Abbas for his tireless efforts to restore the legitimate rights of his people, to establish a Palestinian State with Al-Quds as its capital and to achieve development and peace there. The United Arab Emirates also supports all ongoing efforts, particularly those undertaken by the sisterly Arab Republic of Egypt, with a view to achieving national reconciliation in Palestine.

The United Arab Emirates attaches particular importance to African countries. It is strengthening its cooperation and partnerships with those countries in line with the United Nations Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2), with special focus on goals to combat poverty and to ensure that Africa, which represents the largest part of the South, receives a fair and equitable share of global prosperity. The United Arab Emirates reiterates its decades-long energy policy, which is based on maintaining the volume and flow of its energy supplies without restriction or political or non-political impediment.

Furthermore, the United Arab Emirates has long and consistently been pursuing a foreign policy based on the principles and purposes of the United Nations, in particular with regard to the settlement of international disputes by peaceful means, non-intervention in the internal affairs of States and the protection of national sovereignty. In that context, we affirm our continued commitment to the one-China policy.

The United Arab Emirates, as an active member of the international community, is always ready to reiterate its commitment to respecting the principles of human rights in the light of its human values and national principles and in line with the provisions and machinery of relevant international conventions. The

universal periodic review on the United Arab Emirates was adopted by the Human Rights Council in Geneva last December.

The United Arab Emirates attaches great importance to the conditions of migrant workers and the protection of their full rights, in accordance with the constitution of the United Arab Emirates, national legislation and the standards of the International Labour Organization. My Government has recently adopted a set of policies and measures aimed at enhancing many aspects of labour protection. It has taken steps to intensify regional cooperation among labour-exporting and labour-importing countries in Asia with what is known as the Abu Dhabi Dialogue, which aims to promote the protection of workers at all stages of contractual labour. Also, the United Arab Emirates actively participates in the International Forum on Migration and Development and supports its activities and research work. The forum was initiated by the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, held on the sidelines of the General Assembly in the autumn of 2006.

Women and children occupy an important place among the national priorities of the United Arab Emirates Government, in particular with regard to education, health, knowledge and human development. The empowerment of women and the care and protection of children are among the major success stories of our national development project. The United Arab Emirates has also made efforts to combat all forms of violence, extremism, crime, violation of human rights and human trafficking through partnerships that are based on equality and mutual respect and contribute to achieving peace, stability and sustainable development.

In conclusion, we hope that our deliberations on the items on the Assembly's agenda this session will lead to positive results that will enhance our joint efforts to establish a more just, peaceful, tolerant and developed world.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Yves Leterme, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Belgium.

Mr. Leterme (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): Nothing is created without men; nothing lasts without institutions. Those words of Jean Monnet, one of the founders of the European Union, remain as true as ever. Security, climate change and some effects of globalization are challenges that all our countries face. That is why a global approach, with the United Nations playing a central role, is needed. But the United Nations must earn that central role. As President Barack Obama said here (see A/64/PV.3), we cannot complain, on the one hand, about the so-called unilateral action of the United States while at the same time expecting it alone to solve all the world's problems.

In that spirit I would call for a new multilateral commitment, as the reform of international institutions is crucial in order to enhance their legitimacy, representativeness and capacity for action. Nothing is created without men; nothing lasts without institutions. From now on, those institutions should work efficiently, starting with the United Nations. It is essential to move ahead rapidly on the reform of the Security Council and of the functioning of the General Assembly.

Indeed, there is an urgent need to improve the efficiency of our own operations. A glance at the organizational chart of the United Nations allows us to see not only the overlaps but also the gaps in the system. It is out of commitment to the Charter of the United Nations that Belgium, one of the founding Members, strongly appeals for more rigour and transparency in the management and budget of the United Nations in order to better use its limited resources.

In addition to the fragmentation of the United Nations system, two other trends reveal the need for enhanced multilateral commitment. The first is the multitude of regional and subregional organizations almost everywhere in the world. It is true that this multitude enhances international cooperation, but regional and international organizations sometimes lack harmonization. Better cooperation should henceforth allow the optimal use of the resources of all.

The second trend can be summed up by the words "imperfect multilateralism". Countries get together on an informal basis to discuss international issues, for example — and this is very pertinent — the economic and financial crisis. These informal groups may, particularly at first, expedite the decision-making of international multilateral organizations, but they cannot replace those organizations themselves because multilateralism cannot be exclusive. Rather, it should

be inclusive and transparent. Nothing can last without institutions, but even the best organized institutions cannot function in the absence of inspiration and human will. Even the best organized institutions are powerless when men prevent them from working.

The economic and financial crisis has been given a great deal of attention, which is only natural. The crisis most severely affects developing countries. It is now more important than ever that donor countries meet their official development assistance objectives of 0.7 per cent of the gross national product. Belgium plans to achieve that goal in 2010.

The worst international disorder is violence between States and within States. Within some States, violence continues to kill, maim and rape millions of people. The worst international disorder is reflected in the wars, civil conflicts, inter-ethnic fighting and harsh repression that deprive millions of people of a decent existence. This is our first and foremost challenge because without peace and security there is no development, let alone sustainable development. Without peace and security, there can be no fair distribution of the wealth of our Earth.

As stipulated in the preamble of the Constitution of UNESCO,

> "since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed".

Indeed, conflict prevention begins with the banishment of all hate speech attacking the dignity of human beings, nations and communities, or the right of States to exist. Far too often, we have witnessed bloodbaths provoked by incitement to hatred. Such speech has no place in this Hall or in this Organization, whose primary mission is precisely to promote peace and security through constructive cooperation.

To function efficiently, our multilateral institutions need leaders and representatives of States who share basic approaches established on the core belief in the unique dignity of each human being. National sovereignty implies responsibility. That is why Belgium wholeheartedly supports the principle of the responsibility to protect. The principle requires Governments to safeguard their citizens against genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. Incidentally, Belgium would like to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his excellent report on this topic (A/63/677) and fully supports his efforts in this area.

It is civilians, and women and children in particular, who are often the primary victims of violence and of indescribable and unacceptable suffering. Indeed, women constitute half of the world's population, but too often we forget that human rights also fully apply to them. In situations of war and violence, women are frequently twofold victims because of the sexual violence inflicted upon them. My country is therefore determined to pursue its action against sexual violence and any kind of violence against children.

Wars are caused by men, not by weapons. Nonetheless, the arms control issue has to be high on the international agenda. That is why Belgium welcomes the meeting of the Security Council at the highest level on the subject of non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament (S/PV.6191). That meeting was undoubtedly a highlight of this week. Resolution 1887 (2009), adopted yesterday, represents, in our opinion, a milestone for a world free of weapons of mass destruction.

However, unfortunately, the latest news from Iran seems to be heading in the opposite direction. My country therefore endorses the very urgent call on Iran and North Korea to cooperate with the international community and respect the Security Council resolutions that pertain to them. If they do not, they will be ostracized by the international community.

At the same time, the fight against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction should not make us overlook conventional weapons, which currently kill on a massive scale. In particular, I refer here to anti-personnel landmines. The Convention that prohibits these weapons entered into force in 1999, and Belgium hopes that it will be strengthened at the Review Conference scheduled to take place in Cartagena, Colombia, in early December. With respect to that Convention, Belgium, along with Thailand, will head the Standing Committee on Victim Assistance and Socio-Economic Reintegration. Furthermore, Belgium has spared no effort to push for the conclusion of the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

Human rights in all their aspects are a major concern for Belgium. That is why my country plays an active role as a member of the Human Rights Council. In that regard, I would like to thank the members of the

Council that entrusted my country, Belgium, with the responsibility and honour to preside over that important institution. That trust is, in my view, a recognition of our commitment.

Finally, human rights also concern the rights of future generations. We do not own this Earth; we have it on loan from our children. Today more than ever, that heritage is threatened, and that is why environmental protection should be our main shared concern and priority. The Climate Change Conference scheduled for late 2009 in Copenhagen is an opportunity that cannot be squandered. We need to make specific and binding commitments there. I believe that the European Union has shown the way with its ambitious package of measures adopted in late 2008.

Institutions cannot function without the input of men. Therefore, those who undermine the performance of these institutions should be held accountable. That is why Belgium has been particularly active in the fight against impunity. An international legal order is required, but it can function only if it is upheld by States governed by the rule of law. I therefore reaffirm the need for common positions that are essential for a world that is safer, fairer and more prosperous. In the words of former Secretary-General Kofi Annan,

> "There is no long-term security without development. There is no development without security. And no society can long remain secure, or prosperous, without respect for human rights and the rule of law." (*Press release SG/SM/10425*)

Strengthening the rule of law at the national and international levels is more vital than ever for achieving a more equitable form of globalization.

I will conclude with these words. Peace and security, sustainable development, and a fair distribution of the wealth of the Earth are the essential, global challenges that we face. To meet these challenges, we need solid international institutions, but institutional multilateralism is not enough. We also need a multilateralism of minds, and men and women of conviction to carry it forward.

This will, belief and ambition motivate my country, a founding Member of the United Nations, to offer the candidacy for the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session of our compatriot Louis Michel, former Minister for Foreign affairs of Belgium and former European Commissioner in charge of Development and Humanitarian Aid. We are convinced that the strength of his conviction and dedication will unite us further. It is indeed only when the men and women who take the floor here are fired by a shared vision of human rights, peace and development that our institutions will be able to deliver what we need: collective results rather than individual achievements.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. S. M. Krishna, Minister for External Affairs of India.

Mr. Krishna (India): I offer my congratulations to Mr. Treki on his assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. My delegation assures him of our fullest cooperation during his stewardship of this Assembly, which embodies the hopes, aspirations and shared vision of peace and development of all the peoples of our planet.

When this session of the General Assembly ends next year, the United Nations will have completed 65 years of existence. These past decades have seen the world change in fundamental ways. Connectivity defines our global condition, and the challenges that we collectively face are truly global. The resolution of these challenges, as we are aware, requires global approaches and solutions. What may happen in one part of the world has an impact on other regions. In the context of these rapidly emerging changes and their deep and diverse effects, we must consider more deeply whether the United Nations and other global governance structures are geared to effectively meeting the challenges that confront us all.

It is of concern that, even after more than six decades of existence, our international governance structures are neither inclusive nor participatory. Consequently, these structures and institutions have not kept pace or evolved with the changed nature, intensity and depth of contemporary global issues. The question is therefore: Are these institutions able to address these challenges adequately or satisfactorily? The reform and restructuring of the global governance architecture are the critical needs of our times, and the voices of the developing world, including those of the small island nations and Africa, are of principal and core relevance if we are to have truly participatory and global responses to global challenges.

One need not look very far to identify these challenges. The current economic and financial turmoil, which did not begin in the developing world, has affected developing countries the most. Growth has slowed, with recession overtaking many countries. The international response to this challenge must consist not only of the measures that have been taken to stimulate economies, but also, more importantly, of finding ways to restructure the current international governance system, which has failed to respond to the virulence of the financial and economic crisis.

To gloss over this structural deficit of the current global financial and economic architecture would imperil the future of a vast majority of the peoples of this world and presage greater difficulties in the future. In the face of the current economic and financial crisis, hard-won gains in alleviating poverty, hunger, illiteracy and disease are being reversed. The achievements of the Millennium Development Goals are seriously threatened. Policies of protectionism under such already adverse circumstances will exacerbate the serious situation that many countries face.

It is imperative that the United Nations act in concert to coherently overcome these challenges. India, which is actively engaged in the Group of 20 and other processes, has always stressed that developing countries must receive priority in any global response to the crisis. The United Nations Conference on the Financial and Economic Crisis held in June was opportune and provided a useful platform for collectively seeking ways and means to respond to the crisis. We now look forward to early implementation during the course of this General Assembly of the follow-up measures agreed on at the Conference.

At the centre stage of multilateralism and international cooperation is the United Nations. This Organization is a platform on which the world meets to express views and undertake commitments on global issues of mutual concern on an equal footing. It is no wonder, then, that the Charter of the United Nations begins with the inspiring words "We the peoples of the United Nations". Inclusiveness and collective action in all aspects of the work of the Organization are at the heart of its Charter. This vision must be our lodestar, the guiding principle of all we undertake. India is committed to working with Member States to make the United Nations more relevant and attuned to contemporary realities.

Reforming the United Nations is a matter of the highest priority. Four years after the 2005 World Summit, there has not been much progress even as newer and more global crises and problems have emerged. We should not let slowness of action weaken the Organization in the face of such challenges. Rather, we must work in concert to make it more robust and capable of effective response.

Reform in the three essentials of the Charter — peace and security, development and human rights — requires our collective attention. The General Assembly must be revitalized in full measure, and its role as the anvil of global deliberation must be strengthened. The Economic and Social Council must become the fulcrum of development. It must be accepted that the Security Council must be strengthened and made more representative by expanding its permanent and non-permanent membership. Ongoing intergovernmental negotiations during the past six months have unambiguously established that an overwhelming majority of Member States share the perspective that an expansion in both categories of Security Council membership is needed.

Climate change is one of the most important global challenges that we face today. Developing countries bear a disproportionate share of its adverse effects, even though they are not responsible for it. Cognizant of the serious threat that climate change poses, India is engaged in the ongoing negotiations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), including at the upcoming Copenhagen Conference. India will work for an outcome that recognizes the development imperatives of developing countries and is rooted in the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities.

We also must move away from concentrating on mitigation only and ensure that there is a focus on adaptation, which is critical for developing countries. We are hosting a high-level global conference on "Climate Change: Technology Development and Transfer" on 22 and 23 October 2009, in cooperation with the United Nations. The objective of the conference is to help formulate a road map for technology in the context of climate change mitigation and adaptation to support the UNFCCC process.

Developing countries must be supported financially, technologically and with capacity-building

resources so that they can cope with the immense challenges of adaptation. Special efforts are required to develop programmes that address the critical needs of small island States and of the most vulnerable countries.

Poverty alleviation and livelihood security are central imperatives for India. To that end, accelerated economic growth and energy security are critical drivers. In pursuing our development goals, India has been successful in significantly reducing its energy intensity. India will continue to pursue that path.

India is aware that the continuing volatility in the fossil-fuel markets, together with the threat of climate change, makes the development of all renewable and clean energy sources — including nuclear energy — crucial. In that context, international civil-nuclear cooperation is important.

India has also taken several independent initiatives to address the issue of climate change. We have put in place a comprehensive policy and legislative framework, as well as a national action plan on climate change with eight separate national missions. An unprecedented afforestation campaign has been launched with a doubling of the forestry budget this year to $1.3 billion, and this increase is going to be sustained every year. The Prime Minister's Council has approved national missions for enhanced energy efficiency and solar energy, setting ambitious goals. We are supporting and facilitating major research to assess various aspects related to climate change.

India attaches the highest priority to the goal of nuclear disarmament and has an impeccable non-proliferation record. We welcome the renewed global debate on achieving a world free of nuclear weapons. That corresponds with India's long-standing and consistent advocacy of nuclear disarmament as one of the highest priorities of the international community. We have put forward a number of proposals on nuclear disarmament at the United Nations, including a working paper in 2006 proposing elements to fashion a new consensus on disarmament and non-proliferation.

Last year, at the sixty-third session of the General Assembly, consistent with India's long-standing commitment as articulated in the Rajiv Gandhi Action Plan in 1988, India reiterated its proposal that a nuclear weapons convention be convened to ban the production, development, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons and to provide for their complete elimination within a time frame. The international nuclear order cannot be discriminatory. Further, States must fulfil the obligations that they have undertaken. Once more, with feeling and with commitment, India reiterates that proposal.

We will continue to engage with key countries to intensify this debate in the hope that greater international understanding will lend itself to a firm commitment to action on nuclear disarmament. It was in that spirit that we supported the adoption of a programme of work, including on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT), at the Conference on Disarmament in May this year. It is consistent with India's position to work with others at the Conference on Disarmament towards the conclusion of a non-discriminatory, multilaterally negotiated and internationally verifiable FMCT, provided it corresponds with India's national security interests. We remain committed to a voluntary, unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing.

India stands committed to the safeguarding of international peace and security. Over the past five decades, we have contributed more than 100,000 peacekeepers and have suffered a high number of casualties during this time. Strengthening the normative basis for peacekeeping operations and giving major troop-contributing countries a greater say will serve to make peacekeeping more effective.

Peace, security, stability and the welfare of our neighbourhood are vital for India. There is a new beginning in Sri Lanka; in Nepal, strengthening the peace process is in our collective interest; and in Afghanistan, the international community must remain intensively engaged and support its development efforts and the maintenance of peace and stability. India is committed to establishing good-neighbourly relations and resolving all outstanding issues with Pakistan through peaceful dialogue.

The barbaric terrorist attack on the innocent people of Mumbai on 26 November 2008 reminded us of the daily and malignant menace that terrorism poses to all countries. There can be no justification whatsoever for such mindless terrorist acts. It is our collective responsibility and duty to work together to ensure that terrorists and the organizers, perpetrators and supporters of such crimes are brought to justice.

In order to strengthen the international legal framework of the fight against terrorism, India has proposed a comprehensive convention on international

terrorism. Discussions on the draft have gone on for far too long. It is time that the convention be finally adopted. India earnestly calls upon all countries to make serious efforts in the next few weeks to arrive at a consensus on the text.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate India's steadfast commitment to the work of the United Nations. Speaking to this Assembly 41 years ago, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi said:

> "The United Nations is the trustee of the world's peace and represents the hopes of mankind. Its very existence gives a feeling of assurance that the justice of true causes can be brought fearlessly before the world. This Assembly and the agencies of the United Nations should, in all that they do, sustain those hopes and promote the causes of peace." (*A/PV.1693, para. 150*)

The truth and conviction of these words are more meaningful today than ever before.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now call on Her Excellency Mrs. Rumiana Jeleva, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria.

Mrs. Jeleva (Bulgaria): I am deeply honoured to address this audience on behalf of the Republic of Bulgaria. I would like to convey my delegation's congratulations to Mr. Ali Treki on his assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session, and wish him success in the months ahead.

Our gratitude goes to Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann for his leadership and guidance during the previous session. Let me also thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his resolute efforts to promote the United Nations and its values.

Bulgaria fully aligns itself with the statement made by the Prime Minister of Sweden, Mr. Fredrik Reinfeldt, on behalf of the European Union.

Furthermore, Bulgaria would like to express its pleasure at the election of Ambassador Irina Bokova as the new Director-General of UNESCO. We would like to thank all Member States for the trust invested in our candidate. Bulgaria takes great pride in having such a high-level representative in the United Nations system and would like to assure the Assembly that our Government will continue to do everything it can to foster the policies and ideals of UNESCO.

As a member of the European Union (EU), Bulgaria is dedicated to the spirit of multilateralism and therefore fully supports the efforts to strengthen the United Nations capacity to deliver effective international responses to global challenges.

The most pressing issues that require our attention are undoubtedly the global economic and financial crisis and the negative impact of climate change. In this light, we particularly appreciate the Secretary-General's initiative to convene the United Nations Summit on Climate Change on 22 September. Furthermore, I would like to express our support for the statement made by the President of France at this general debate. We are indeed running out of time, and if we want to reach an agreement in Copenhagen, timely action is needed.

In the globalized world of the twenty-first century, my country strongly reiterates its full commitment to the principle of effective multilateralism based on international law, the United Nations Charter and the United Nations system, which place the human being and human security, rights and dignity at the very centre of international politics.

Bulgaria considers cooperation in South-East Europe and the Black Sea region to be a priority of its foreign policy. Situated at a particular geographic crossroads, Bulgaria is in a unique position to assess the areas' pressing issues in their complexity. Together with our partners in the EU and NATO, Bulgaria is proactively cooperating with its immediate neighbours.

Bulgaria strongly affirms that regional cooperation is an integral part of European integration of the western Balkans. It contributes to the strengthening of confidence, stability, security and the affirmation of European standards in the region. To this end, Bulgaria is committed to pursuing efforts aimed at combating and preventing the use of hate speech likely to create fears and tensions between groups from different ethnic, national, religious or social backgrounds.

We therefore call for full compliance with human rights and fundamental freedoms in the western Balkans. In this context, Bulgaria believes that the building of a stable, peaceful, democratic and multi-ethnic Kosovo, living in peace with its

neighbours, is of primary importance to the security architecture of the western Balkans and Europe as a whole.

Bulgaria is particularly interested in the peaceful long-term development of the Black Sea region. Despite active cooperation among countries in the region, much of its potential has so far not been utilized sufficiently. In this light, it must be said that the South Caucasus remains a region of concern for Bulgaria. We call upon the parties involved to overcome their differences and to engage in a dialogue to ensure the peaceful and prosperous development of the entire Caucasus.

Today, it is our task not only to respond to the challenges but also to embrace the opportunities that the Black Sea region provides. Bulgaria believes that the strong Eastern dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy addresses the needs and priorities of all the partners. We see opportunities for launching projects in important sectors, such as transport, trade, energy, environmental protection and border security. My country is one of the main supporters of the Black Sea Synergy initiative, which serves as an inclusive cooperation platform between the European Union and the countries of the wider Black Sea region. Bulgaria will endeavour to contribute to the success of those policies, in particular through its forthcoming chairmanship of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization.

Bulgaria would, furthermore, like to thank the United States and our partners in the European Union for the constructive part they have played in both the Balkan and the Black Sea regions. We are grateful for their counsel and support, and we very much look forward to further deepening and intensifying our cooperation.

The list of persistent grave risks and challenges to global security is, regrettably, not a short one. We are convinced of the need to step up efforts aimed at achieving progress in the areas of international disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. In this regard, the need for the full and universal implementation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty regime remains of utmost importance, and my country is dedicated to supporting a successful outcome of the 2010 Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference.

We are deeply concerned by the recent turn of events regarding Iran's nuclear dossier, and, in this respect, we strongly appeal to the Iranian authorities to comply with relevant resolutions of the Security Council and to provide their full cooperation to the International Atomic Energy Agency. Bulgaria hopes that the forthcoming negotiations between Iran and the five permanent members of the Security Council plus Germany (P5+1), scheduled for the beginning of October, will make it possible to renew the discussion on the Iranian nuclear programme and pave the way for a comprehensive solution before December this year.

Bulgaria confirms its position that further reform of the main United Nations bodies is necessary. We believe it is desirable to enhance the transparency and effectiveness of the system. Furthermore, we need only recall the enormous challenges facing Member States and the international community in the twenty-first century world to see the need to reform the United Nations.

Reform of the Security Council should certainly be a central element in any reform of the United Nations. We would like to reiterate our position that both categories of membership on the Council need to be enlarged. Furthermore, we believe that the regional Group of Eastern European States should be allocated at least one additional non-permanent seat.

Bulgaria is well aware of the need to pursue international diplomacy in order to overcome existing conflicts. As a consequence, we welcome the positive role that the European Union plays as a mediator in numerous conflict areas around the world. One such area is the Middle East. Bulgaria firmly supports the efforts of the members of the Quartet in the Middle East peace process and believes that re-establishing direct dialogue between the Israeli and Palestinian delegations is of fundamental importance. Bulgaria firmly supports the position of the European Union in this regard and underlines the fact that a comprehensive and lasting peace can only be realized if the Israeli and Palestinian peoples can live peacefully, side by side, each in its own sovereign State and in mutual recognition.

Another area where the United Nations, supported by the European Union, has an enormous potential to be a force for peace and stability is in Afghanistan. Bulgaria believes that, overall, a more comprehensive and coordinated approach in

Afghanistan is desirable. In this light, the Bulgarian Government thanks the Swedish presidency of the European Union for preparing a blue book listing all European efforts in Afghanistan with the aim of helping improve coordination on the ground.

Together with our European Union partners, Bulgaria is strongly committed to the cause of human rights. As such, Bulgaria will continue to clearly condemn all such violations of human rights as torture, slavery, sexual abuse and female genital mutilation. Additionally, in this light, we support the call by the Swedish presidency of the European Union for greater empowerment of women and gender equality. Furthermore, we appreciate the Secretary-General's report entitled "Implementation of the responsibility to protect" of January 2009 (A/63/677) as an important and timely document, and we state our firm interest in further discussing and elaborating on the concept. We hope that, with the recent adoption of resolution 63/308, this concept will be implemented.

In the course of the past year, the world has faced multiple challenges related to the global economic and financial crisis. This crisis has had a huge impact on virtually all sectors of our economy. Bulgaria firmly believes that we can only overcome the crisis through the joint efforts of all relevant actors. We are all in the same boat, and we must all ensure that the lessons of our past mistakes are learned and remembered. To that end, we call for further intensification of the cooperation between developing and developed countries. Additional support should be provided to developing countries in order to avoid further aggravation of global poverty and hunger. More broadly, we are more concerned that the global recession might lead to a decrease in the total level of official development assistance. Greater attention should therefore be paid to the conclusions put forward in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness of 2005 and the Accra Agenda for Action of 2008. Furthermore, while we are well aware of our financial constraints, Bulgaria, as a country that only recently emerged from the status of a recipient of foreign aid, is committed to live up to its international responsibilities and is determined to be a force for peace and stability.

It is true that the efforts of the United Nations for peace, stability and development constitute an impressive list of achievements. It is also true that a lot more could and should be achieved this year and in the years to come. At the end of the day, however, the achievements of the United Nations depend on what we, the Member States, are willing to do. We have a shared responsibility for the future of our planet. Only through open and honest cooperation can we be successful in overcoming the challenges ahead.

So let us work together, demonstrate beyond any doubt our goodwill, flexibility and commitment, and make this sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly a real success.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Össur Skarphéðinsson, Minister for Foreign Affairs and External Trade of Iceland.

Mr. Skarphéðinsson (Iceland): It is indeed an honour for me to address this Assembly for the first time. I would like to start by congratulating His Excellency Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session, and I pledge him the full support of the Icelandic delegation in the difficult and arduous work that lies ahead of all of us.

Only a year ago this weekend, my country, Iceland, found itself caught up in the beginning of the global financial storm. It swept almost the entire banking system in Iceland off the ground and left my country facing its most severe economic setback in living memory. Iceland was the first country to fall victim to the greed and excess of financiers who abused rules, followed dubious ethics, hid their money in tax havens and introduced an irresponsible system of stellar bonuses that incited reckless behaviour and risk-taking beyond anything that we had ever seen before.

In Iceland, those responsible left in their wake a scorched earth: bewildered citizens, full of sorrow and anger, scarred by the possibility of imminent bankruptcy and the loss of their houses and jobs. I can tell this Assembly, however, that Iceland is pulling through, not least because of the hard work of our citizens, but also because we had friends that we could lean on. Our Nordic family did not desert us. The Baltic countries gave us their full moral support. And I would especially like to mention Poland, which, out of the generosity of her heart, lent us a hand without ever being asked — which we shall never forget.

The International Monetary Fund offered us a stabilization programme that remains broadly on track, although I have to use this opportunity to voice

Iceland's grave dissatisfaction with the fact that unrelated bilateral disputes have prevented the programme from being fully implemented. I would also like to mention that our application to join the European Union has been very warmly received by our European neighbours, for which I am very thankful. I can therefore stand before this Assembly and say with confidence in my voice that despite the hardships that are behind us, the financial storms in Iceland are beginning to break. That is due to the resilience and hard work of the Icelandic people, but also because you, the international community, lent us some very important support in the hour of our greatest need.

The salient point is this. In a globalized world, we have to tackle problems together, globally. We need to fight together the corruption that contributed to the international recession; we must work together to ensure that the financial czars are not allowed to speculate again with people's lives; we have to work together to obliterate the tax havens they used and we also need to lock arms to create a sound global regulatory framework. The world has to fight the recession together, in the spirit of the United Nations, but also within the framework that is created by the United Nations.

Earlier in the week I had the privilege and honour to take part in the high-level Summit on Climate Change. It touched my heart when I heard the President of Kiribati describe the plight of his country, which might literally be obliterated from the face of the earth without his nation being responsible for it in any way. This is due to the drastic climate change that the whole world is facing. The President of Kiribati asked for the only thing that every human and every nation on earth really deserves: he asked for justice.

I believe that the best way to give justice to the people of Kiribati, to the people of the nations in the South Pacific and elsewhere, and to the generations of the future, is that we together put all our effort into reaching a decision on a legally binding agreement in Copenhagen that will strike at the core of this problem. I also believe that the best way to convince the sceptics to take that step is to highlight the success stories that we have. We have to show the sceptics that our goals are realistic and that we can achieve them.

I remind the Assembly that at the beginning of the general debate we heard President Lula present the success story of Brazil in terms of the sustainable use of energy resources that they have achieved. Allow me to take this opportunity to tell the success story of Iceland in this regard. A generation ago, we were as dependent on imported fossil fuel as any other nation in the world. Today, a generation later, 80 per cent of our energy needs are met by renewables. All our heating, all our electricity is 100 per cent renewable. What we did was to use the treasures that we had not realized were under our feet and before our eyes, in the form of rivers — we used hydro and geothermal power. And I maintain that what we did, others can also do.

I want especially to focus attention on the vastly underestimated possibilities of geothermal energy. Many of the countries of the African Rift Valley have similar potential to that of Iceland. In South-East Asia we have the greatest geothermal potential in the world, and in Latin America there is also valuable potential. Many of these countries could, with the geothermal expertise that countries such as Iceland have, achieve a real transformation to clean energy; some could even become self-sustaining in terms of energy. But, of course, as always, what we need is finance. What we really need is a global climatic fund to transfer renewable technologies to developing countries to enable them to continue growing on a sustainable, renewable basis. The expertise we have developed in Iceland is available, and I would like to add that, despite our present financial difficulties, we have ensured that the geothermal training programme of the United Nations University in Iceland remains open and fully funded, as it has been for the past 25 years.

Climate change is also producing drastic effects in the Arctic. Iceland, the only State that lies entirely within the Arctic region, has therefore designated the Arctic as one of the main areas of her foreign policy. Science tells us, and we can read about it in the news, that soon a great part of the Arctic Ocean might be ice-free at the end of summer. This is a development that we have not experienced in our lifetimes, and it bears both good and bad tidings. If it happens soon, it will open a pathway for transportation between the Pacific and the Atlantic via the Arctic Ocean, with great benefits to trade. For better or worse, it will also facilitate access to vitally important resources in the Arctic.

However, here we must tread very carefully. The Arctic also possesses the most fragile ecosystem of the world, and it will be a real challenge to strike the right balance between the fragile environment and the use of

its resources. In Iceland, we believe that it is very important to address those challenges regionally through the Arctic Council and that any territorial claims — which we have already seen emerge in the news — should to be settled on the basis of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Climate changes are also likely to have considerably negative effects on the fishing stocks of the world. Representatives would know better than me that more than a billion people, 95 per cent of whom live in developing countries, depend on fish as their main source of protein. As is known, Iceland's track record in the sustainable management of fishing stocks is second to none. In that, as in the geothermal field, we also have technological expertise that we are willing and would like to share. In that respect, I am also happy to say that despite Iceland's current financial woes, we have ensured that the UNU Fisheries Training Programme in Iceland is fully funded. It is available to Member States, and I would be very happy for them to take us up on that offer.

During the course of this week, I have heard many speakers criticize the United Nations, but I would like to use the occasion of my first speech to this Assembly to praise the work of the Organization. In many fields, it has done well in times when the odds have really been heavily stacked against it. I want especially to take two examples from a great many that I could relate.

Iceland and my Government have always strongly endorsed the rights of women. In particular, we have taken to heart Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on the rights of women, of women in the world to take part and be active in the peace processes in war-torn regions. I wish to remind the Assembly that next year is the tenth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) and to take this opportunity to urge the United Nations to actively use that anniversary to promote the role of women as peacemakers all over the world. I would add that in that context, the unanimous decision of the General Assembly to create a new United Nations composite gender entity, to be headed by a special Under-Secretary-General (resolution 63/311), was also very helpful. We thank all representatives for those important steps, and I urge the Secretary-General to move forward on that matter as expeditiously as possible.

The other cause that I wish to mention as a reason for my gratitude is the unanimous decision of the Security Council earlier this week to call for global efforts to stop the spread of nuclear arms and to boost disarmament (Security Council resolution 1887 (2009)). I remember when I was a very young editor in Reykjavik in 1986, when President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev descended on the capital of Iceland. That historic meeting really signalled the end of the cold war. I will never forget that at that time, for the first time in my life, a world free of the nuclear nightmare became a workable goal, and that goal must be vigorously pursued. Only 15 minutes ago, I heard the Foreign Minister of India state that one of the greatest goals of the Indian Government was to support that development. Even though Iceland is a little bit smaller than India, I would add its weight to that goal. We really must pursue it as strongly as we can, and I am grateful to the United Nations for providing the framework for that.

There have also been other happy events for me, as a newcomer to this Assembly, during my first days here. I found it invigorating to hear President Barack Obama boldly describe his vision of a peace agreement in the Middle East based on the two-State solution and the cessation of all settlements. I believe that his strong declaration has created a fresh political momentum that we who are assembled here and the Governments of this world must not allow to fade away.

To sum up, I have talked about my nation's financial difficulties, but I have also said that we are pulling through, not least because we have been able to seek the advice and support of the international community. Of course, Iceland is a small nation, but I have also described how, even though we are a small nation, we have much to offer that could contribute to the solution of some of the problems that, together, the world is facing today. Our expertise in the geothermal field, for example, can be of vital importance in the face of the climate crisis, and our experience in sustainable fishing can be instrumental in staving off the depletion of fishing stocks. Our geopolitical position in the Arctic and our cohabitation with its dangers and beauty for more than a thousand years can be of great value in striking the right balance between a fragile ecosystem in the Arctic and the use of its resources.

It is true that the crisis destroyed financial assets, but Iceland's real assets — natural resources, human

capital and social welfare — remain intact. That is why I am so confident when I say that although Iceland was the first to fall victim to the global financial crisis, it is already on the road to recovery.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Sergei Martynov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus.

Mr. Martynov (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): This General Assembly Hall is, in fact, the situation room of the entire world. It seems to me that over the years we here in this Hall have collectively understood and known what to do. The main thing now is to agree how to do it. We all need an effective tool.

There is hope that we are already close to a common understanding of how and with what tool we can achieve our goals. For the international community to emerge from a series of multiple crises and to overcome multidimensional new threats, we must achieve a policy of partnership. Modern international relations are increasingly being built on the basis of horizontal networks that include all interested and constructive stakeholders in today's world — States, international organizations, civil society and the private sector. Partnerships are a mechanism of engagement that has no reasonable alternative in the context of a pluralistic and contradictory world.

One particular political factor that raises hope that that approach is a realistic instrument is an emerging meeting of minds — involving various forces on different continents — that see in partnerships a link by which one can extend the chain. By way of illustration, I will cite the example of the call of Belarus, from this rostrum two years ago, for systems based on opposition and confrontation to become new international ones based on engagement and partnership (see A/62/PV.11). A year ago, when opening the sixty-third session of the General Assembly, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon noted,

> "Nations can no longer protect their interests or advance the well-being of their peoples without the partnership of other nations." (*A/63/PV.5, p. 1*)

This year the United States declared its readiness to "build partnerships and solve problems that no nation can solve on its own". The European Union has also addressed the General Assembly with the same message of cooperation and partnership. The President of Russia spoke from this rostrum about a "collective agenda for unification" (*A/64/PV.4*) dictated by life itself.

After a long break it seems that the international community is starting to think along the same lines on security, partnership and development and that the world's political leaders are beginning to speak the same language — that of common sense.

An important proof of the principled readiness to walk the path of partnership is the efforts of the 20 largest world economies to combine their resources to lead the world out of the global economic crisis. We welcome in that connection recent meetings of some regional economic and political groups of States. On a less positive note, it should be noted that some aspects of the agreements reached remain to be carried out by the parties, for example, the rejection and removal of protectionist measures in international trade. It should be said that the Group of Twenty format — let alone the Group of Eight — is too narrow to be considered a representative partnership. In this regard, engaging economic regional groupings of States with significant potential, for example in our region — the Eurasian Economic Community — would make the format more representative.

We also believe there is great potential for dialogue and partnership between the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and other major centres of power, as was discussed recently at the recent summit of the Non-Aligned Movement in Egypt. After all, today the Movement represents a significant international factor. Its members make tangible contributions to international security and are important actors on the international socio-economic stage.

Today I address my colleagues from the European Union, the United States, Russia and other developed countries and call upon them to show leadership in dealing with the unprecedented global challenges through close partnerships and coordination with all members of the international community, including Belarus. Members of the international community, especially the world's power centres and leading political groups, should give practical effect to their good intentions by developing global partnerships and crisis strategies.

The greatest potential for responding to global threats and challenges is clearly here in the United Nations. As a founding member of the Organization,

Belarus is convinced of the ability of the United Nations to play a leading role in generating partnerships to overcome the most acute global problems.

Was it not under the aegis of the United Nations that the foundation was laid for the establishment of an anti-terrorism coalition and elaboration of a counter-terrorism strategy after the tragic events of 11 September 2001? And by the way, should the United Nations not consider proclaiming 11 September as the day of the fight against terrorism? We would be interested in hearing States' reactions to this idea. Have not the achievement of the General Assembly in establishing the New Partnership for Africa's Development been acknowledged worldwide? The Millennium Development Goals were also formulated in the context of a global partnership for development.

United Nations capacities have been strengthened by some of the progress made in reforming the Organization. In this regard I note, in particular, a new positive element, namely, the thematic debates in the General Assembly.

Bearing in mind the experience and potential of the United Nations, Belarus has proposed the establishment of a global thematic partnership against human trafficking and slavery in the twenty-first century. An informal mechanism on the topic initially took shape at the Global Forum to Fight Human Trafficking in Vienna in February 2008. It must be institutionalized to work effectively — I stress institutionalized, not bureaucratized — through the elaboration and adoption by the General Assembly of a global plan of action to combat human trafficking.

The idea for such a plan garnered wide support in May during the thematic debate in the General Assembly. We have also heard expressions of support from high ranking participants in this general debate. We welcome the recent decision by the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-third session to appoint the Permanent Representatives of Cape Verde and Portugal as facilitators of the consultations on the global plan. We call on all our partners and friends to engage actively in this work.

Global economic development is always driven by certain engines, which are replaced by new and more effective ones. For example, coal and steel were engines for the European industrial revolution; the engine for the global economy after the Second World War was oil, which was replaced by information technologies in the 1990s. The economic engine of the past decade was finance. It is absolutely obvious that the global crisis has demonstrated the need to replace the outdated financial engine. What can and should replace it? We believe there will be not just one engine for the future, but a number of elements that include a leading role for clean, green technologies. Given the increasing interdependence of energy and environment and the determining role of energy in global survival, it cannot be otherwise.

This year we face an especially momentous task: elaboration of new post-Kyoto agreements to deal with global warming that include universal introduction of new and renewable energy sources. This issue was discussed in depth at the thematic dialogue of the General Assembly held in June 2009. That was a good beginning, yet we must move decisively forward. The increasing topicality of the energy and environment agenda requires creation of a specific partnership — a global mechanism to improve the access of developing countries and countries with economies in transition to new and renewable energy sources.

This issue must not be shelved. We need to lay the foundations for a qualitative breakthrough at this session of the General Assembly. Belarus will initiate a comprehensive study of this issue with the involvement of leading international experts and include in its results conclusions and recommendations for the future report of the Secretary-General. We believe that, given current conditions, the strengthening of the economic potential and political role of middle-income countries could be yet another motor of economic and social progress.

Experience has clearly shown that resources and capacities of a narrow circle of traditional world leaders are insufficient for overcoming the crisis. The greatest potential for growth rests with middle-income countries. To a certain extent, one could draw a parallel here with the key role played by the middle class in the stable economic and political development of States. It is no coincidence that the majority of United States and European companies are turning their eyes to the Asian and other developing world markets.

Mindful of such importance, let alone the mere numerical strength of this group of countries, which includes more than 100 States, the United Nations system must take an active role. With this idea in mind

last year, Belarus, together with its partners, sponsored the adoption by the General Assembly of a resolution on cooperation for development with middle-income countries.

This year, for the first time within these walls, a substantive discussion was held on how to make the best use of the capacity of the United Nations system to assist such countries in addressing their specific social and economic problems, which are particularly important for sustainable global development.

We hope that the work of the General Assembly on that topic will not be seen simply in terms of competition for the scarce resources of the donor community and the United Nations. That is not the point. The larger the number of economically prosperous States in the world, the stronger and more predictable the world economy will be. There will be increased predictability and fewer crises and catastrophes. There will be more opportunities for economic growth in the poorer countries and an increase in international assistance will be generated. In the long run, everyone will be a winner.

I cannot but turn to the subject of Kyoto and post-Kyoto, which sets the tone for the current session of the General Assembly. The possible outcome of the Copenhagen meeting is, unfortunately, not quite clear. All of us, big, medium-size and small States, have to do our utmost to ensure its success. But the perfect does not have to be the enemy of the good.

Belarus is the only State in the world that, for several years, has been trying to achieve what may seem, at first glance, to be a paradoxical goal. That is, to take on significant commitments to reduce harmful emissions. The commitments we have taken happen to be more significant than many of our neighbours, and even than those of some European Union countries.

Since we are all partners here, I will put it in a blunt and straightforward way. We do not understand why many States, including powerful groups of States, which are, by the way, leading the way in post-Kyoto advocacy, do not allow us to assume legally binding and significant Kyoto commitments. I address this call to partners and colleagues. If we want to strengthen the Kyoto paradigm, let us not undermine it. I sincerely hope that the call of Belarus for speedy ratification of our accession to Kyoto will be heeded.

In a year's time, here in New York, there will be the 2010 United Nations Summit. That is the only forum that has united the heads of State and Government of the G-8, the G-20, the European Union, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Commonwealth of Independent States and others. Belarus proposes considering the 2010 Summit as a summit of partnerships, the venue for putting forward and acting upon the ideas of global partnerships.

We support the intention of the President of the current session of the General Assembly to start preparations for the Summit well in advance. At the Summit itself, we propose the adoption, at the level of heads of State and Government, of a mechanism, an algorithm or a plan of close cooperation on the part of Member States for the years to come on how to overcome global challenges. And in the next few months, delegations could make suggestions as to the substance of such a document. Negotiations on the document could start in January 2010.

Sixty-five years after the signing of the United Nations Charter, we can and should make an honourable attempt to return to the roots of the United Nations by restoring the original meaning of the word "united", which forms part of our name. It all depends on us.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Seyoum Mesfin, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

Mr. Mesfin (Ethiopia): It is indeed a great pleasure for me to extend my warmest congratulations to Mr. Ali Treki on his election to preside over the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session.

Permit me also to express my appreciation to the outgoing President for his effective leadership during the course of the previous session of the General Assembly.

We are grateful to our Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for the tireless efforts that he exerts to ensure that the United Nations fulfils its purpose during this complex and crucial period in our collective history. I wish to thank him, in particular, for the initiative he took to convene the special Summit on Climate Change this past week.

It has now been 18 years since we, Ethiopians, managed to remove a military dictatorship of

unprecedented cruelty. The consequences of lack of democracy within the context of great diversity are all too apparent. Ethiopia's diversity leaves no room for autocracy, dictatorship, military — of whatever variety — cannot mix with the sociological make-up of the country. That was the explanation why Ethiopia was at the edge of the cliff during the last years of the military Government.

The last 18 years have not been easy for Ethiopians. We had to begin again in every aspect of our lives, without exception. There was hardly any economic development throughout the entire 17 years of military dictatorship. Even prior to military rule, Ethiopia faced not just the lack of democracy, but also a stagnant economy and lack of development.

However, the challenges of the last 18 years have not been limited to the weight of the past, to our legacy, in both the political and economic areas. We also had to face other challenges which have not been inconsequential in terms of affecting the tempo of our democratization and development. These challenges, however daunting they are, do not undermine our achievements, over the last 18 years, to democratize our country and lay the basis for rapid economic development.

In both areas, the historic trajectory of the country has shifted. No matter what detractors might say, Ethiopia is now a country with a future and great hope. During the entire long history of the country, we have never witnessed two-digit economic growth, yet we are slated to register that rate of growth this year. That would constitute our sixth consecutive year of such a level of achievement, and it has been attained despite pressures coming from the global economic crisis.

In democratic governance, the new Ethiopia has irrevocably split from the old Ethiopia in terms of both individual and group rights. With respect to the latter category of rights, Ethiopia, as has so emphatically been asserted in our Constitution, is no longer a prison of nations and nationalities. In terms of respect for individual political and human rights, if hard facts — and not an extraneous political agenda — are the measure, Ethiopia is now, all things considered, not at the tail end of countries, but in the vanguard, for its commitment to this value as well as in practice.

However, over the last 18 years we have had many challenges whose negative effects cannot be overlooked. I would like to say a few words about each of the challenges that we have had, and continue, to face.

The first is in the area of peace and security. Obviously, Ethiopia is part of the Horn of Africa. As a neighbour sharing a longer border with Somalia than any other country and with a large population of Ethiopian Somalis, we have been affected by what goes on in that sisterly country; indeed, it would be a miracle if that were not the case.

Now, speaking of Somalia, it is time that we abandon the fiction that the war there is just among Somalis. It is not. Somalia is being hijacked by foreign fighters who uninhibitedly proclaim that their agenda has nothing to do with Somalia. Theirs is an ambition that goes well beyond Somalia, and they say that loud and clear. Those who advise them not to be so blunt have not succeeded.

The Somali crisis has been with us as long as the new Ethiopian Government has been around. It is not just that we lost a partner because of the absence of a functioning Government in Mogadishu. We have also been directly affected by the crisis — a crisis, let us not forget, that is assisted and abetted by others, including by States whose authorities move with ease in and rub shoulders with members of civilized circles. It is not only rogue States, but also States that are ostensibly decent that continue to fuel extremism in Somalia and to fund its activities.

Let us call a spade a spade. Today in Somalia, there is greater coordination and cooperation among those who assist the extremists than among those who profess support for the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) of Somalia. The consequences are obvious. As the latest horrific suicide attack on the African Union Mission in Somalia has shown, those destroying Somalia are being emboldened and their supporters rewarded.

Conversely, the TFG authorities continue to lose confidence, as pledged support continues to dwindle in practice. The international community is being stingy even with the symbolic steps of showing resolve against extremists and spoilers in Somalia. The countries of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) spoke with one voice and appealed to the United Nations Security Council. African heads of State and Government endorsed unanimously the IGAD call for the Security Council to

stand up and be counted in support of the fight against extremism in Somalia. However, it appears that the Council does not consider Somalia to be a priority.

In the meantime, those supporting extremism have made Somalia a priority. It is critical that the international community wake up before the hijacking of Somalia by extremism is fully consummated. It is therefore unlikely that the Horn of Africa will soon rid itself of the crisis in Somalia, and there will be consequences for the work we have to do in our country in terms of development, fighting poverty and speeding up the process of democratization.

That is why the peace process in the Sudan, and in particular the effective implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, is so critical for us. The Horn of Africa cannot afford the consequences of failure in the Sudan peace process. We are very close to both parties in the Sudan, and that is an asset that we want to use wisely.

It would be naïve to believe that the conditions of peace and stability in our region have no influence over our domestic agenda. They do. Open societies are manifestly vulnerable to the kind of situation prevailing in the Horn of Africa. The mix of extremist forces and rogue States is not conducive to the growth of democracy in close proximity.

We have other challenges as well. One has to do with climate change. It is gratifying to us Ethiopians that this challenge is drawing the attention of the world more than ever before. I wish to reiterate our appreciation of the effort deployed by the Secretary-General in this regard. We look forward to the international community's taking resolute action in Copenhagen on the basis of the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

We in Ethiopia have been affected by climate change in the most difficult and complex ways. The effect on our agriculture and on our plan for food security has been enormous. It is no longer every decade or so that we face drought, but rather every three to four years. If not drought, then we face floods. Either way, the consequences have been enormously damaging to our plan to ensure food security.

Let me take this opportunity to thank all those partners who have stood with us to address and mitigate the adverse effects of climate change on our agricultural activities. I wish to thank in particular Secretary of State Hillary Clinton for organizing a meeting on partnering for food security on this very day.

As for the Copenhagen climate change summit, it is indeed gratifying that we in Africa have decided to be innovative with respect to our representation and in connection with our approach to negotiation. Africa has decided to be represented by a single team of delegates which will negotiate on the basis of a common African position. It is an honour for Ethiopia, in the person of its Prime Minister, to lead the African negotiating team. We expect much from Copenhagen.

We have had yet another challenge to our development and to the effort we have been making to deepen the progress of democratization in our country over the past 18 years. This has to do with the less-than-conducive international economic — and, I might add, political — environment within which we have to operate. What we have faced on both scores, economic and political, has been a lack of tolerance for diversity, policy-space experimentation and independent thinking. Unjustified conditionalities have abounded, both for economic and political reasons — on the one hand because of strategies derived from market fundamentalism and on the other because we dared defend ourselves against unjustified aggression. Ethiopia's first real attempt at economic development coincided with the period when market orthodoxy made the role of the State anathema. Perhaps times have changed.

We could have achieved more over the past 18 years, but what we have indeed achieved in the democratization of our society and in economic and social development is not insignificant. In fact, as I have already stated, what we have witnessed in Ethiopia over the past decade and a half is no less than a change in the trajectory of the country's development. Moreover, we have also continued to discharge our multilateral responsibilities in our own subregion, on our continent as members of the African Union, and in the world beyond in connection with our obligations to the United Nations.

In our own region, along with other members of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, we have done whatever is necessary and within the limits of our capacity to help Somalia achieve peace and to shield it from the onslaught of extremist forces. As part of the African Union, we continue to discharge our

responsibilities to maintain the pan-Africanist tradition, to contribute to the peace and security of the continent, and to accelerate the integration process of the continent brick by brick.

The United Nations is an Organization which we cannot live without. We benefit from the Organization in more ways than one. We also take our obligation to it very seriously. It is in that spirit that we continue to strengthen our contribution to the United Nations peacekeeping efforts. In this we shall continue without fail. It is for that reason that I wish to conclude by reiterating Ethiopia's commitment to the United Nations and by affirming our commitment to all efforts at reforming the Organization, including the Security Council.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Cristian Diaconescu, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Romania.

Mr. Diaconescu (Romania) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to address to Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki my warmest congratulations on his election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. I wish him every success in meeting this challenge.

My country is proud of its historic commitment to tolerance, fostering rapprochement and confidence-building in international debates. Romania has always demonstrated its resolve to enhance multilateralism, be it by bringing parties in conflict together, overcoming artificial boundaries or promoting cooperation between developed and developing countries.

I take this opportunity to pay tribute to an important event for Central and Eastern Europe, which we are commemorating this year. It has been 20 years since the autumn of change that reshaped Europe and opened the way to historic opportunities for the former Eastern bloc. Two decades have passed since the fall of the iron curtain, and we now recognize that the power for change that democracy represents is one of the most potent European values. It remains the hope of millions of young people throughout the world who defend freedom of expression, multi-party systems, respect for diversity and freedom of the press. We must never forget our history. After two decades of democratic change, we must never forget where we started. That is what now strengthens the values that are shared throughout Europe and that allow us better to understand democracy's transformational sweep throughout the world.

We now face the most important challenges humanity has ever faced. The negative impact of climate change has only been exacerbated by the global financial and economic crisis, the food crisis, the rise in energy prices and pandemics. The world is experiencing increasingly tense situations that make our efforts to meet the challenges of the new century even more sensitive. We have now to address terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, prolonged conflicts, failed States, food and energy insecurity, migration, poverty and the violation of human rights.

I hope that, in the face of not just of one but of many challenges, Member States will make this situation an opportunity for visionary change. Through the implementation of solutions to the economic and financial crisis and responses to the negative effects of climate change, we can aspire to create greener economies and jobs, societies more responsible in their use of energy, improved infrastructure, and financial instruments strong enough to support such a transition.

(*spoke in English*)

I would like to refer to a key topic on the United Nations agenda: climate change. I do not intend to reiterate all its negative effects or the danger it poses to the very existence of humankind. Members are well aware of all of them, and we have been speaking about them extensively over this past week. However, I do want to stress the principles that underpin Romania's approach to this issue and that we would like to invite Members to consider as well.

Nature is part of our daily life. If we respect nature, we can take long-term benefits from it, making us better prepared to design and build our future. Respect is essential. We are all affected by climate change. There is no boundary to protect a certain country or a certain area. It is not as if something happening in the Pacific is not also the business of somebody living in a developed European capital. That means that we all have a common responsibility towards others. We must be aware that everything we do and any decision we take has an impact on others. That is why it is so important to base our decisions on such values as human respect, solidarity and responsibility.

We commend the Secretary-General for his dedication and commitment in dealing with this issue. By bringing us together as world leaders seeking consensus on what is to be done about climate change, he has rallied us to work towards the Conference in Copenhagen. We expect an ambitious agreement to be reached in Copenhagen.

Another challenge that affects us all is that of the global financial and economic crisis. Again, solutions must be to the benefit of all. We need to join forces rapidly to resume economic growth and development, reform financial instruments and preserve international stability. The world financial system no longer meets the needs and realities of our time. The institutions monitoring that system have to be reformed. We need to create an early prevention and early warning mechanism, and the United Nations should be entrusted with more resources and prerogatives as the main coordinator for the delivery of global public goods. Our task will be to ensure discipline and predictability within the system, while preserving the freedom of the market as the main engine of economic growth. We welcome in this respect the commitments undertaken at the summit of the Group of Eight to discourage protectionism and ensure the conclusion of the Doha negotiations by 2010.

We need a twenty-first century multilateralism that is both innovative and pragmatic. Romania is devoted to that cause and seeks to expand its cooperation with the United Nations in ever more creative and pragmatic ways. To illustrate Romania's interests and its more concrete contributions to the United Nations system, I am proud to point to just two major projects that came to fruition this year. The opening of the first emergency transit centre for refugees in Timişoara, the first such body in the world, was the result of excellent cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration. The second project is the signing, here in New York, of a memorandum of understanding between the Government of Romania and the United Nations regarding the training of United Nations close protection personnel within the Centre for Excellence of the Romanian Protection and Guard Service, to be opened soon in Bucharest.

In all our endeavours to identify a stronger multilateral approach to guaranteeing a safer and more sustainable system, we should all consider at least four essential elements. The first is managing the current economic crisis so as to secure sustainable development and growth. The second is staying focused on the demanding and interconnected issues of climate change, poverty, food security, health, energy, migration and the lack of democracy in some parts of the world, while maintaining international peace, security and stability. The third element concerns the consolidation of international law. The fourth concerns strengthening and increasing the efficiency of international institutions.

The United Nations and its bodies must be at the centre of this renewed multilateralism with what the Organization does best — promoting development and security while advancing democracy, human rights, the rule of law and social development. At the Millennium Summit, we all pledged to boost the role of this unique and indispensable Organization. Indeed, in recent years, the United Nations has undergone a wide-ranging process of realignment and reform. However, it is also very evident that reform of some of the most important United Nations bodies is still slow and inconsistent. I hope that, in the months and years to come we will see more progress in this respect.

Romania continues to share the view that the overarching goal of reforming the Security Council should be to achieve a more effective, transparent and representative body, and will join in any effort to that end. Since the intergovernmental negotiations in February, the reform process has shifted into a higher gear, allowing us to pursue the mandate set forth at the 2005 World Summit.

Another significant decision contained in the 2005 Outcome Document (resolution 60/1) concerns a crucial issue: the responsibility to protect. A few months ago, the General Assembly held a very constructive debate on how to implement this concept. The responsibility to protect is one of the most important conceptual evolutions for the United Nations. This path should be thoroughly explored by Member States, as it holds tremendous preventive potential.

Solutions to the challenges of the twenty-first century should also make more use of efficient regional mechanisms. I am referring to organizations such as the African Union, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe,

and NATO, which are either cooperative bodies or ones directed towards regional integration.

The potential of smaller, knowledgeable groups of States to address the problems of a region is high. If supported, such regional groups can more easily muster political will and the capacity to act. This is particularly true in situations related to peace and security, where swift and decisive action is often required.

While serving its mandate in the Security Council in 2005, Romania promoted the Council's resolution 1631 (2005), which sought to strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in maintaining peace and security. Since then, a lot has been done in this respect, but the potential for action under Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter is still to be fully unleashed.

Unfortunately, there are still crises around the globe that cannot be resolved by regional means alone. We continue to face protracted regional security challenges, such as those in the Middle East and various parts of Africa, as well as the South Caucasus and the Black Sea region. Reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan are turning out to be more complex and difficult than we all initially thought. Such situations require our undivided attention and comprehensive efforts.

My country is investing a great deal in the stability and security of the world. More than 1,500 Romanian troops serve in United Nations-mandated and -authorized missions in all areas of the globe, from Kosovo to Afghanistan, from Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Sudan. In recent years, Romania has been honoured to be able to participate, along with its allies and partners, in the stabilization and reconstruction of Iraq. At the end of June, Romanian troops concluded their mission there, leaving Iraq with the satisfaction of an accomplished mandate. The Iraqi security framework has improved significantly. The same could be done in Afghanistan. By keeping its commitment steady and deepening it when needed, it will be possible for the international community to succeed in consolidating a sovereign Afghan nation.

Among the perils that threaten us most, terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction remain of major concern. Nuclear proliferation is of particular concern, given the increasing accessibility of technology capable of large-scale destruction. In this context, we urge those Member States that are considering nuclear programmes to fully heed the concerns of the world community and to abide strictly by international norms and regulations.

Lately, there have been encouraging signs in the realm of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We highly appreciate the recent agreement of the Presidents of the United States and the Russian Federation for nuclear arsenal cuts, confirming the commitments undertaken by those two States. As there have also been positive indications from the United States with respect to its ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the international community can now feel confident that the biggest nuclear Powers are determined to advance the nuclear disarmament process.

(*spoke in French*)

It has been said that violence begets violence, but to ignore or not take into account the basic principles of human rights would be to do the same. In the same way, intolerance fuels further intolerance. We can debate historical themes, but we cannot deny history altogether. The tragedies, crimes against humanity and genocides are sins of the past, but they should also be lessons for the present and the future.

We have already demonstrated our willingness and capacity to accept our past in a critical way. Romania reiterates its commitment to combating extremism, xenophobia and all forms of racism and discrimination. At the same time, my country actively promotes diversity and multiculturalism, as well as intercultural and interreligious dialogue in the framework of the International Organization of la Francophonie and the Alliance of Civilizations.

Unfortunately, democracy is too often a slippery term in the diplomatic framework of the United Nations. But we cannot have a stable world and meet the challenges that face us without promoting certain values — freedom, democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights — that have been of proven benefit to humanity. We must continue to help the men, women and children of the world to choose their future freely, enjoy decent employment and trust the authority of law and justice.

Democracy and the rule of law constitute the immune system of human society. Just as it is impossible to fight off disease when the immune

system is weak, poverty spreads in a degraded environment. Whether it is a matter of creating equality in the areas of gender and health, achieving education for all or ensuring a clean environment, it is not merely a matter of funding, it is just as much about establishing the basic principles of human rights and democracy.

I should like to conclude by expressing my conviction that there is no challenge too great for our countries as long as we remain united. No threat is too powerful to destroy us if we succeed in mobilizing our wisdom and our capabilities.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Royal Highness Prince Mohamed Bolkiah, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Brunei Darussalam.

Prince Bolkiah (Brunei Darussalam): I would like to congratulate the President on his election, as well as to express my appreciation to the outgoing President for his contributions over the past year. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General, his staff and the agencies of the United Nations for doing such a fine job all over the world in very difficult situations. It is very much appreciated.

I like the theme for this year's debate, but it is a very long one. So I would like to say a few things about the first two words, namely, effective responses. I think that they are the most important ones. There is no problem with the second word. We all know what responses are, because we make them every day. But "effective" is a far more difficult word, and that is because none of us here actually decides what it means. It is not up to us to judge whether our work is successful or not. That is up to the next generation. In other words, it is our children and grandchildren who are going to look back at the past and see whether we did a good job. That is the way it has always been.

That is what many of us in Brunei Darussalam have been doing recently, because this year is an important anniversary for us. It is now 25 years since we joined the Organization. Those of us who were here at that time remember it very well. We remember exactly why we joined. It was a dangerous period, and a small country like ours did not want to be left on its own. We wanted to be part of a larger community, a world community. But there was a real problem. The cold war was on and nearly everyone was divided into two camps. That meant that we had to choose sides. That did not help us very much at all.

Mr. Hackett (Barbados), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Looking at the United Nations today, I would judge its response to the past 25 years as very effective. Things are much better than they were back then. Certainly, many of the old problems may still be with us, such as terrorism, poverty, disease, war and the 60-year struggle by the Palestinian people for justice, hope and dignity. But we also have a lot of good things going for us nowadays. We have much more knowledge. Communication is better than ever before. The best thing of all is that we are not divided into two camps. As a result, we have far more opportunities.

When our next generation looks back at us and judges us, I think that the question they will be asking will be: What did we do with those opportunities? In other words, were our responses effective ones? Getting back to where we are now, I think we have opportunities to make a great response.

The Secretary-General and his staff have important proposals for reform, change and development. If we accept them and do something about them, we can take the biggest opportunity of all: we can change the whole direction of world affairs. What is more, I think that this is exactly what people want us to do.

There is a lot of support for change outside this building. No one really wants to carry on being split up into developed or developing nations any more, or as first, second or third worlds. They want us to be in one world, in one situation, sharing its problems and being part of any solution.

That is the message many of us got after the first Group of 20 (G-20) meeting, back in April of this year. It seemed to give us a real choice — either to keep on doing things the way we have always done since 1946 or to change directions and all work together, big and small, regardless of background, culture or faith, and find a new way into the twenty-first century.

This week's G-20 meeting in Pittsburgh sent out the same message, and it was good to hear. It is only a soft message and a small change. The big decisions are still being made for us, and not with us. But at least it is a start. It is the kind of change we want to see, and

there is nothing to stop us from taking it a long way further. After all, it is not like 25 years ago. We have a real choice and no one is forcing us to take sides. So for the moment it is up to us. The key words, however, are "for the moment".

The G-20 are not the only ones sending us messages. There are other very important ones. They are coming from the environment, the climate, the global economy and energy and food supplies, and they all add up to a serious warning. They are telling us that very soon the choice will not be ours to make. Any changes will be made by forces that we cannot control. That means any response may be largely ineffective. When the next generation looks back at us, they may not just be judging us. They could even be condemning us.

The Acting President: I now call on Her Excellency Ms. Aurelia Frick, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Minister for Justice and Minister for Cultural Affairs of Liechtenstein.

Ms. Frick (Liechtenstein): It is a great honour for me to address the General Assembly, a body that represents the heart of multilateral diplomacy, for the first time tonight. As such, it is called to fulfil the expectations and hopes of peoples and individuals around the world — hopes for peace, hopes for an end to poverty and suffering and hopes to see human rights respected.

Since my arrival in New York a couple of days ago, I have been encouraged by the multiple calls for international cooperation and the renewed commitment to multilateralism. For Liechtenstein, the United Nations has always been the epitome of multilateralism. We believe that genuine multilateralism is needed today in order to address the challenges before us.

On disarmament and non-proliferation, we seem to be finally about to enter a new era.

On climate change, the United Nations is working hard to seal the deal. Last Tuesday, an unprecedented number of heads of State or Government gathered in this Hall to discuss climate change threats. We applaud Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for this excellent initiative. The Liechtenstein delegation left that meeting with the belief that a breakthrough is possible because everybody seems to understand the gravity of the situation. We are approaching Copenhagen with the firm conviction that we must listen to the voices of those who are most at risk — those whose very survival is at stake. What is now required from us is a leap of faith — no half-hearted compromises, no more postponing, and no more talk about concessions either. Copenhagen is not about giving up something — other than our self-destructive habits. It is about investing into the future of our planet.

The global financial and economic crisis has rippled through our countries and disrupted the lives of people worldwide. It has also deeply affected our progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. While much attention has been paid and much money has been mobilized to keep the world economy afloat, another crisis has emerged in its wake. It is a crisis of global governance, and it may have lasting repercussions.

We acknowledge that there are times when concerted action by groups such as the Group of Eight and the Group of 20 (G-20) can bring us closer to solutions for everyone. But we cannot ignore the gap between those who are taking decisions and the rest of us. Good and effective solutions require the support of those who are to implement them. Most important, rules must apply to everyone equally, on the basis of a level playing field.

The notion of sovereign equality is one of the core principles of the United Nations Charter. Indeed, it is the main pillar of genuine multilateralism. I was therefore pleased to accept an invitation from the Foreign Minister of Singapore to discuss issues of global governance together with some other colleagues and friends. I look forward to continuing those exchanges and I hope that the G-20 and other partners will find interest in our input and ideas. Our goal is positive engagement, productive cooperation and the highest possible quality in decision-making.

The drafters of the United Nations Charter understood that the inclusion of all States was a prerequisite for effective multilateralism. In today's interconnected world, we must uphold this principle more than ever. But the practice of the Organization has sometimes veered away from the ideals of inclusion, transparency and legitimacy.

On international peace and security, the Security Council is mandated to carry out its functions on behalf of all of us. Our understanding is therefore that the Council's legitimacy depends on the extent to which its actions reflect a very wide political consensus. Often,

though, the Council shows little interest in including in its decision-making process those who are instrumental for implementation. Together with the other members of the Small Five Group, we will continue to work for inclusion and transparency in the Council's work. We will also look for further improvements in the Council's sanctions procedures. As numerous judicial challenges have shown, those procedures must be brought closer to international standards of human rights and due process. Such improvements would go a long way in improving the effectiveness, perception and legitimacy of sanctions.

The composition of the Security Council is outdated. This is sadly almost the only agreement we have found after many years of controversial discussions on its enlargement. Our position on the matter is clear. None of the proposals submitted at the 2005 World Summit, or variations thereof, will receive the necessary support in the Assembly, let alone in the ratification process. We see only two avenues towards expansion. We can wait for a massive institutional crisis to hit the Organization and then expand the Council under enormous public pressure, or we can work in a cooperative manner towards a solution that is both a compromise and politically sustainable. We believe that only the latter approach is in the best interest of the Organization. As a result of the last session, there are now clear ideas on the table on how to bridge the gap. They deserve a thorough review during the coming months.

Over the past two decades, multilateralism has perhaps been most successful in the area of international criminal justice. The first generation of international tribunals has had a tremendous impact, and is now approaching the conclusion of its work. Most important, we have created the International Criminal Court — an institution that seemed a distant dream not too long ago. During its first years in operation, the Court has been remarkably successful. It has also been subject to controversial political discussions. This is not surprising, because justice can be difficult and can seem inconvenient. That is particularly true in situations of ongoing conflict. But it is not a choice. To quote Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, the debate is no longer between peace and justice but between peace and what kind of justice. Indeed, peace, development and justice go hand in hand. These tasks must be fulfilled, first and foremost, by States themselves. We must therefore galvanize efforts to strengthen national judiciaries, in accordance with the principle of complementarity.

The International Criminal Court will not be able to put on trial all perpetrators of the most serious crimes. But its work illustrates the world's consensus that there must be accountability for these crimes and that impunity is no longer an option. The 2010 review conference will give us the opportunity to add the crime of aggression to the list of crimes under the active jurisdiction of the Court. We hope that we will find it in ourselves to seize this historic event.

The General Assembly remains the heart of genuine multilateral work. We must trust that the President will lead the Assembly in a manner that reflects the priorities of the membership as a whole. Important negotiations are ahead of us. We will prepare the 2010 summit on the Millennium Development Goals, continue discussions on the arms trade treaty, move ahead with various reform processes, negotiate both a new budget and a new scale of assessments, address human rights both in specific situations and thematically, keep working on the promotion of the rule of law at all levels, work to strengthen the framework for development and humanitarian assistance, and much more.

Looking at the work programme ahead, it seems to us that the General Assembly does not need much revitalization. There are numerous concrete challenges in front of us, to which we Member States must rise. We must look beyond our short-term domestic interests and work hard to make progress on our comprehensive agenda. The renewed expressions of commitment that we have witnessed in this Hall over the past days give us confidence. The Assembly will do its best to live up to the world's expectations and, more than ever, strive in unison.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Lawrence Cannon, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Canada.

Mr. Cannon (Canada) (*spoke in French*): The establishment of the United Nations came about through the fundamental recognition of our interdependence as peoples and nations. Canada was among its founding members, who were inspired at the time by the need to create an international consensus for the stability and security of a world ravaged by war, more than 60 years ago. There is therefore no more appropriate forum than this one for me, as Minister for Foreign Affairs of Canada, to reaffirm my country's

commitment to collective action, namely, to work together with all countries to pursue shared objectives and overcome common challenges.

The global economic and financial crisis, as well as the global security and environmental threats facing us, have underscored the extent of that interdependence. We have placed economic recovery and growth at the top of our priorities and have taken decisive action in Canada to mitigate the impact of the crisis on all Canadians.

However, the recovery of Canada's economy cannot happen in isolation from economic recovery across the world. Moreover, protectionism is a common threat to all of the world's economies. History has taught us that we cannot hope to emerge from the current crisis if we impede global trade in an effort to protect our national economies. We therefore need vigorous and effective consultation at the highest levels so that we can work together to resist the protectionist urge.

Since the establishment of the United Nations, more than 100,000 Canadians have served in United Nations missions in Africa, the Americas, the Asia-Pacific region and the Middle East. Today, thousands of others — soldiers, police, diplomats, aid workers and others — are working in support of missions led or mandated by the United Nations around the world.

Eradicating terrorism in all its forms is the responsibility both of Canadians and of the United Nations. Indeed, Canada is committed to combating terrorism and to ensuring that the perpetrators and supporters of terrorism are held accountable for their actions. The Taliban in particular are a threat to global peace and security. Like the United Nations, Canada is determined to eradicate that threat.

Our mission in Afghanistan is the most vivid illustration of Canada's determination to that end. It also constitutes our most significant overseas contribution. Canada's mission is an efficient, integrated, civilian-military partnership of approximately 2,800 military personnel and more than 100 civilians. Those Canadians are working tirelessly and making great sacrifices in support of the United Nations-mandated Mission to reconstitute a stable and secure Afghanistan that is at last led by Afghans themselves.

In the months ahead, Canada will expect Afghan political leaders to make progress on key priorities — from good governance to anti-corruption efforts and from reconciliation to reconstruction, economic growth and regional cooperation, so as to promote stability in their country. As they tackle the many challenges ahead, they must ensure that their efforts promote, protect and improve human rights in a concrete manner, in particular the rights and living conditions of Afghan women and girls.

Canada is also providing significant assistance to Haiti, where our contribution will total $555 million between 2006 and 2011. We aim to promote democracy, security and economic growth and, above all, to secure a better future for all of Haiti's children and young people.

Many other challenges remain. Canada regrets the deteriorating security situation in southern Sudan, and we call for the full implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. Along the same lines, we encourage all parties to the Darfur conflict to end hostilities through the joint mediation of the United Nations and the African Union. Canada is determined to contribute to resolving the conflict in the Sudan. Since 2006, we have disbursed more than $640 million in support of international efforts to achieve sustainable peace in that country.

We are all acutely conscious that nuclear proliferation is a global threat we all face. Canada was deeply troubled by the recent revelation that Iran has been building a covert uranium enrichment facility for several years. We condemn Iran's continued refusal to respect Security Council resolutions and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) obligations. We therefore call on Iran to allow the IAEA immediate and unfettered access to all sites, including that facility. We expect a full investigation.

We hope that talks between Iran and the five permanent members of the Security Council plus Germany that are scheduled for 1 October will address the continued duplicity surrounding Iran's nuclear programme. Prime Minister Stephen Harper of Canada has been clear in his discussions with President Obama, Prime Minister Brown, President Sarkozy and our other allies. Canada will welcome the efforts deemed necessary to remove what is clearly a threat to international peace and security.

In that regard, Canada commended President Obama for having taken the initiative to organize a summit meeting of the Security Council on the issue of non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament (see S/PV.6191). We commit ourselves to working with other countries to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and

new terrorist threats. However, finding a diplomatic solution to those problems will require that we mobilize political will to ensure that every country adheres to the vision of a world free of nuclear weapons.

(*spoke in English*)

At this time of the year in my country, the leaves on the trees are changing colours. That dramatic display reminds all Canadians of the need to protect our natural heritage, which is one of the most majestic in the world. But neither borders nor seasons can stop the havoc caused by climate change. Canada therefore remains committed to an ambitious post-2012 global climate change agreement that is consistent with the principles and provisions of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and supports sustainable, low-carbon global growth.

We are committed to taking domestic actions to reduce our total greenhouse gas emissions by 20 per cent from 2006 levels by the year 2020, and by 60 to 70 per cent by 2050. Canada is a world leader in the development of clean technologies to combat climate change, including carbon capture and storage. We seek to establish a new global partnership that will advance the development and deployment of those technologies.

Canada joined other countries at the L'Aquila meeting of the Group of Eight (G-8) and at the Major Economies Forum in affirming the broad scientific view that the increase in global average temperature above pre-industrial levels ought not to exceed two degrees Celsius.

This global phenomenon needs a global response. That is why Canada wants to see all emitters be part of this international effort. We congratulate the Secretary-General for convening his productive Climate Change Summit, as well as for assuming the leadership that naturally falls to the United Nations in this area. All major economies will be required to meet this global challenge. This must be reflected in the context of a fair, equitable and effective agreement at Copenhagen in December.

Adaptation to the impacts of climate change is an important issue for all countries. It must be a core element of a post-2012 climate change regime if we are to build resilience to climate change impacts. Canada has contributed significantly to a number of initiatives, including the World Bank's Pilot Program for Climate Resilience. We continue to support international action that strengthens the capacity of the poorest and most vulnerable to adapt to a changing climate.

As an Arctic State and Power, Canada is proud of its long-standing sovereignty over that increasingly promising territory. Canada also recognizes the important responsibility that we have to Northerners and to the sustainable development and environmental protection of the region. Cooperation with our Arctic neighbours and the peaceful pursuit of our interests has underpinned and will continue to underpin Canada's arctic foreign policy and to guide our actions in the region. Through our bilateral and multilateral engagement — whether at the United Nations and the Arctic Council or in working with our Arctic partners — Canada will continue to show leadership on such Arctic issues as shipping, oil and gas and contaminants and biodiversity.

Since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 61 years ago, Canada has worked vigorously to strengthen the United Nations human rights machinery to ensure the credibility and integrity of fair and balanced mechanisms to promote human rights and fundamental freedoms. Human rights are an important part of Canadian foreign policy and our relations with Member States. During our recently completed term on the Human Rights Council, Canada worked to make it a forum for constructive international dialogue. We will continue to work towards building an efficient, responsive and credible Human Rights Council that is true to its founding principles. Canada will also continue to promote respect for basic human rights and the freedom of expression and association. And we will continue to advocate for those unjustly detained in the world's most abusive regimes.

Finding the political will to translate our values into actions and ensuring that we continue to hold to account those who would violate basic human rights is in the interest of all Member States. Supporting those who are making sincere efforts to advance the human rights of their populations is also one of our collective objectives.

Canada is meeting its international commitments. We are on track to double our international assistance to $5 billion by 2010. We have also already met our commitment to double aid to Africa between 2003 and 2009. Canada will also continue to provide humanitarian assistance to those affected by conflict and natural disasters.

Through Canada's chairmanship of the Sierra Leone country-specific configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, we are working to bridge the gap between humanitarian assistance and long-term development. As Chair of the G-8 in 2010, Canada will place emphasis on making the G-8 more accountable and effective. Accountability means fulfilling our commitments. Effectiveness is about strengthening our partnerships, including with the United Nations, to tackle challenges such as the fragility of States and nuclear non-proliferation. Canada will also co-host the summit of the Group of 20 (G-20) in June 2010, along with our good friend the Republic of Korea.

Our priority will remain economic recovery and building the foundation for sustainable growth, including for the most vulnerable. Earlier this week, Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced a concrete and innovative contribution to that effort. Building on our previous G-20 commitments, Canada will provide the African Development Bank with approximately $2.6 billion in additional lending room. That will assist the Bank in responding quickly to the demands of its borrowing members while it continues its poverty reduction efforts.

I would urge representatives not to let the dizzying succession of major events addressed here cause them to lose sight of the importance of reforming the Security Council. The Council is our most powerful means of collective action. But we can, and indeed we must, make it more effective, more accessible and more flexible — more adapted, in fact, to the challenges and opportunities of the broader international community.

Canada has long supported efforts to make the Security Council more responsive to today's security challenges and more representative of the world's regions, in particular Africa, which has been historically underrepresented. Any real reform must lead to increased transparency and accountability. That will not be achieved by extending the privileges of a few to a few more, but through democratically elected access to the Security Council and through more consultation with and openness to the wider membership of the United Nations.

In conclusion, this small reminder of the responsibility we all bear for our citizens' economic, environmental and nuclear security can leave us perplexed or even worried. But what we must never forget is that, in this seemingly uneven battle, we have in our arsenal the most effective weapons ever devised by humankind, namely, freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Xavier Espot Miró, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Institutional Relations of the Principality of Andorra.

Mr. Espot Miró (Andorra) (*spoke in Catalan; English text provided by the delegation*): I must first apologize for the absence of our head of Government, Mr. Jaume Bartumeu Cassany, who, due to his institutional agenda, is unable to attend the general debate.

It is a great honour for the Principality of Andorra and the Government that I represent to speak in the General Assembly Hall. We Andorrans are well aware of the significance of being a small State within the United Nations. We are not trying to make our mark on international politics, but we want to make clear our intention to respect and defend international law, standards of good-neighbourly relations and the principle of solidarity between peoples.

Europe is our natural frame of reference. We wish to be recognized in that way, not only in terms of cultural and historical affinity, but also in the legal and economic fields. In brief, our conception of solidarity, both domestic and international, and our notion of international relations are the same as those of the rest of Europe.

Since 1993, we have had a constitutional framework that allows us to translate all those principles into practice and to make them a reality. Supported by that constitutional framework, on 10 August we presented a law for the exchange of information on fiscal matters, which, once debated and amended, was approved by the parliament on 7 September.

We have always been certain of Andorra's loyalty to the international community. Yet we thought it appropriate to dispel any doubts and to follow the recommendations of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and other international institutions, as expressed in meetings of the Group of 20.

That is the first example, but others will follow, because our Government's priority is to dispel any doubts about our determination to adapt to the demands and expectations of our European neighbours and the

rest of the international community. We are convinced that this and other steps will be appreciated and understood by all international stakeholders that may at any time have harboured doubts about our community spirit towards the rest of the world. We are also confident that this new era will enable us to interact more with Europe and other continents by strengthening our international bonds and our economic and human presence.

In line with that legislation, our country has already been in contact, and even signed agreements, with some European countries. In the future, we will do likewise with other countries, including the United States of America, Australia and Argentina. Needless to say, our priority has been to negotiate with France, Spain and Portugal, which are our closest neighbours.

Incidentally, I would add that Andorra has suffered from a lingering structural crisis for at least the past four years. This has now been exacerbated by the world economic crisis. The world cannot solve our particular crisis for us. We must do it for ourselves. To concentrate on the idea that interests us, I assure the General Assembly that our Government's action focuses on clearly demonstrating to the international community that we are fulfilling our duties. We very much wish to cooperate, promote international ties and instil confidence.

The exchange of tax information will undoubtedly result in the signing of double-taxation agreements. As a result, we will boost our relations with countries with which previous links were somewhat weak. Indeed, is that not one of the founding objectives of the United Nations?

The legislation to which I have referred addresses issues that have been at the heart of OECD discussions for the past few months. It will affect requests for information launched after the entry into force of tax-information exchange agreements or double-taxation agreements.

Let us be clear, tax havens and fiscal opacity, which have been identified and condemned as two of the major financial evils of the twentieth century, are matters that all Andorrans would like to overcome soon. Our strategic position is clear, and our commitment is strong.

At the same time, we are proposing a tax reform that will allocate resources according to priorities that serve the general interest and provide guarantees to Europe and to the rest of the world that we want clear, transparent and accountable relations. That reform will offer entrepreneurs and professionals an opportunity to export goods and services from Andorra on an equal footing. Only then will international companies seriously consider the possibility of investing in Andorra within a stable juridical environment.

I sincerely hope that there will be no doubts about my Government's desire to face the economic issues that have been at the heart of international debates over the past few months. The need to move forward towards greater financial transparency in Andorra leads us to expect the same standards from the international community. We have understood and noted that the system that governed the world economy in the twentieth century has become obsolete.

International organizations and every political, economic and social institution must make efforts to guarantee transparency. We believe that reform of the international economic system should be immediate, rigorous and credible. It should be led by the United Nations, in close cooperation with the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization.

However, in order to face that and other challenges, we need to modernize the Organization, revitalize the General Assembly and reform the Security Council. In our opinion, those objectives, along with so-called system-wide coherence, must include the right to gender equality.

We in Andorra thus understand that we need fair, clear and internationally recognized standards and regulations to instil confidence in Andorran entrepreneurs and employees alike. But we should also consider the demands of the international financial situation and the need to promote transparency and regulatory mechanisms for financial activities.

Solving the international financial crisis is one of our main priorities. There should be no doubt about that. However, we need to tackle other issues affecting the international community. I am referring to climate change. As has already been mentioned in the Assembly Hall, this is one of the most serious challenges humankind has ever faced.

We in the Principality of Andorra recognize the efforts of the United Nations to try to mobilize the international community. As French head of State and

Co-Prince of Andorra Nicolas Sarkozy reminded us here (see A/64/PV.3), it is time that each State make a strong commitment to solving this issue. Andorra's commitment to combating the effects of climate change is real. Progress can already be seen in such efforts as our ratification of the Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer.

We hope that at Copenhagen in December it will be possible to adopt a new climate agreement that is equitable, efficient and ambitious from a scientific point of view. We believe that, to achieve a positive result at the Conference, it is essential to involve all society, especially younger generations.

We believe health to be a fundamental right that is necessary to achieve sustainable development in Europe and throughout the world. We face new challenges in the health sector. The new influenza virus is one such challenge. The Andorran Government has decided to fight it by making vaccination available to the majority of our population. That decision was taken in cooperation with our neighbours and the World Health Organization. On another matter, the Principalities of Monaco and Andorra have joined forces to finance a four-year project to reduce the vulnerability of women of reproductive age stemming from the food crisis affecting Madagascar. Those are two examples of fruitful and successful cooperation between international actors.

The responsibility to protect populations against genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity serves to remind us once again of the need for responsible cooperation. Neither world Powers nor mid-sized and small countries can abandon cooperation. We all are necessary, because we all are inhabitants of the Earth.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the general debate for this evening. However, several representatives have requested to exercise the right of reply. May I remind members that statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second intervention, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Salsabili (Islamic Republic of Iran): I would like to place on record our position on two issues that were raised in the plenary meetings of the General Assembly held this morning and afternoon. I do so to clarify and reject the allegations and misunderstandings about Iran's peaceful nuclear activities and about the treatment of individual protesters. With regard to the second issue, I shall refer to the unacceptable claims to three Iranian islands in the Persian Gulf.

First, concerning the allegations and misunderstandings about Iran's peaceful nuclear activities and the treatment of individual protesters put forth by a few European delegations and others — in particular the delegations of the Netherlands, Slovakia, Austria and Canada — the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran would like to place on record that those allegations, fears and concerns are totally untrue and without any foundation. Iran's nuclear activities are, and always have been, for peaceful purposes. They therefore pose no threat whatsoever. The reports of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) bear witness to the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear activities.

As a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Islamic Republic of Iran observes its legal obligations under the Treaty, as well as our safeguards agreement with the IAEA. We are, however, determined to exercise our legitimate right to develop nuclear energy technology. That policy is based on long-term planning to meet the growing energy needs of our country. On that basis, the establishment of a new enrichment plant has been carried out strictly in accordance with Iran's safeguards agreement with the IAEA.

Contrary to the absurd allegations of concealment made against my country, I would like to draw the Assembly's attention to the statement issued yesterday by the IAEA's spokesperson, in which she confirmed that Iran had already notified the IAEA of this issue.

Rather than addressing the existing proliferation threat posed by the un-safeguarded and secretive nuclear weapons installations of the Zionist regime, unwarranted focus on safeguarded nuclear facilities for peaceful purposes is counterproductive and constitutes a dangerous distraction. We urge members of the European Union to refrain from turning a blind eye to that real proliferation threat and, in that regard, to abandon their inconsistent approach to non-proliferation.

As to the allegations about the mistreatment of protesters, it is worth mentioning that the laws of the Islamic Republic of Iran are based on the prohibition of any form of ill-treatment of individuals. That overriding principle has been accorded special

attention in the Constitution. In order to ensure effective respect for that principle, not only has the Constitution provided for the punishment of those who ignore prohibitions and commit acts of ill-treatment and torture, but provisions have also been made for the legal protection of the victims of mistreatment.

I should now like to turn to the second issue on which I wish to exercise my right of reply for the record, namely, the unacceptable claims by the United Arab Emirates against the territorial integrity of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which was also referred to by a few other speakers. This afternoon, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates raised unacceptable claims about the three Iranian islands located in the Persian Gulf, namely Bu Musa, Tonb-e Bozorg and Tonb-e Kuchak. The Islamic Republic of Iran categorically rejects those remarks as unacceptable claims against Iranian territorial integrity. We emphasize that those three islands, which are located in the Persian Gulf, are eternal parts of Iranian territory. Consequently, they are under Iran's sovereignty.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, while stressing its determination to continue its good-neighbourly, brotherly and friendly relations with neighbouring United Arab Emirates, reiterates that all actions and measures taken in the Iranian island of Bu Musa have been in exercise of the sovereign rights of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and in accordance with the arrangements emanating from the documents exchanged in 1971. The Islamic Republic of Iran stands ready to continue its bilateral talks with the relevant officials of the United Arab Emirates, with a view to removing any misunderstandings that may exist in this regard.

Moreover, the Islamic Republic of Iran wishes to stress that the only correct and historically and universally recognized name for the sea between Iran and the Arabian Peninsula, as the United Nations has itself also emphasized, is the Persian Gulf. Therefore, any use of fabricated names for that body of water is totally groundless, absolutely unacceptable and of no legal, geographical or political value.

Mr. Starčević (Serbia): The delegation of the Republic of Serbia is compelled to exercise its right of reply with regard to today's statement by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Albania.

It is regrettable that the Prime Minister used the General Assembly rostrum to directly interfere in the internal affairs of a neighbouring State Member of the United Nations by supporting an attempt at secession by Serbia's ethnic Albanian minority in our province of Kosovo.

In that regard, the Prime Minister's statement that unilateral declaration of independence — which is contrary to the fundamental principles of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) — has created "an important factor for peace and stability in South-East Europe" (*supra*) does not correspond to reality. That irresponsible act has only further aggravated and complicated the situation in our region. It is also deplorable that the Prime Minister of Albania spoke in support of Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence while the issue of the legality of Kosovo's attempted secession is being considered by the International Court of Justice, the supreme judicial authority of this Organization.

Contrary to the Prime Minister's assertion, inter-ethnic tensions in Kosovo have not been significantly reduced, but are merely frozen in uneasy expectation: When will the next attack on the members of the Serb community in Kosovo come? Today, the Kosovo Serbs are the most threatened community in Europe. In that situation, the claim that "many Serbian families are coming back to Kosovo to build a future there" is a bitter irony. The return of forcibly expelled Serbs or people belonging to other non-Albanian ethnic groups has not even begun.

What Kosovo has become since its unilateral declaration of independence is merely fertile ground for all sorts of illicit activities, as is well known to the two international missions in Kosovo, the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo and the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo.

This is not a popular subject, and we cannot expect the Prime Minister of the Republic of Albania to speak about it. Other European countries do, although still in hushed voices. However, the truth about Kosovo as a "factor for peace and stability" is spreading, although not exactly in the sense in which the Prime Minister of the Republic of Albania meant it.

Mr. Al Nahyan (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish at the outset to apologize for having requested the floor at this late hour. However, I am obliged to exercise my right of reply after hearing the comments of the representative of Iran about the three

occupied islands of the United Arab Emirates. My delegation would like once again to express its regret, as we have over the years, at all such claims, which contradict the historical, legal, democratic and geographic facts and documents concerning the three islands of the United Arab Emirates — Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa — occupied by the Islamic Republic of Iran since 1971.

Therefore, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the provisions of international law, we call once again on the Iranian Government to demonstrate its good intentions towards the United Arab Emirates either by engaging in unconditional, serious and direct bilateral negotiations with us to end the occupation of the three islands so that they can be restored to the Emirates, as they are an integral part of its territorial integrity and national sovereignty and form part of our continental shelf and our economic zone, or by agreeing to resort to the International Court of Justice for a legal opinion on this issue, as has been done with regard to similar important issues.

My delegation would like to reiterate that any measures carried out by Iran on those islands are null and void and give the occupying force no rights or obligations.

Mr. Stastoli (Albania): I am taking the floor to exercise my right of reply in response to the statement just made by the representative of Serbia.

The Republic of Kosovo is an undeniable reality, and we all know that, sooner or later, we will all have to accept it, despite the old-fashioned political rhetoric that, not long ago in the Balkans, fuelled the worst conflicts since the Second World War. It is time to look to the future with respect and integrity and to abandon once and for all nationalistic discourse that impedes the development of that region and its integration into the European family.

The world is not united on this issue. Some have recognized Kosovo; some have indicated that they need more time. But it is an undeniable reality that the number of countries that have recognized it — 63 to date — has only continued to increase.

In our view and analysis, the Government of Kosovo has, in the space of these two years, taken very important and courageous measures to create all the conditions and facilities necessary for the return of the Serbian minority to their homes. Special programmes have been designed and funds allocated to attain that objective. It is a fact that the number of returnees has significantly increased. We are not the only ones to recognize that the Republic of Kosovo has taken every measure not only to restore and preserve each citizen's spiritual and cultural heritage, but also to promote it as much as possible.

Albania reserves the right to advocate the independence of the Republic of Kosovo because it is a neighbouring country that, not long ago, felt the severe consequences of an atrocious war fought next door in which, within seven days' time, 500,000 refugees crossed the border to escape the horrors inflicted by a tyrannical system. We never want to return to such a horrible situation. To the contrary, we are looking to the future — a future of cooperation, peace and stability in which all countries, all peoples and all nations will build their future in harmony, seeking a common goal: European integration.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in exercise of the right of reply.

The meeting rose at 8.50 p.m.